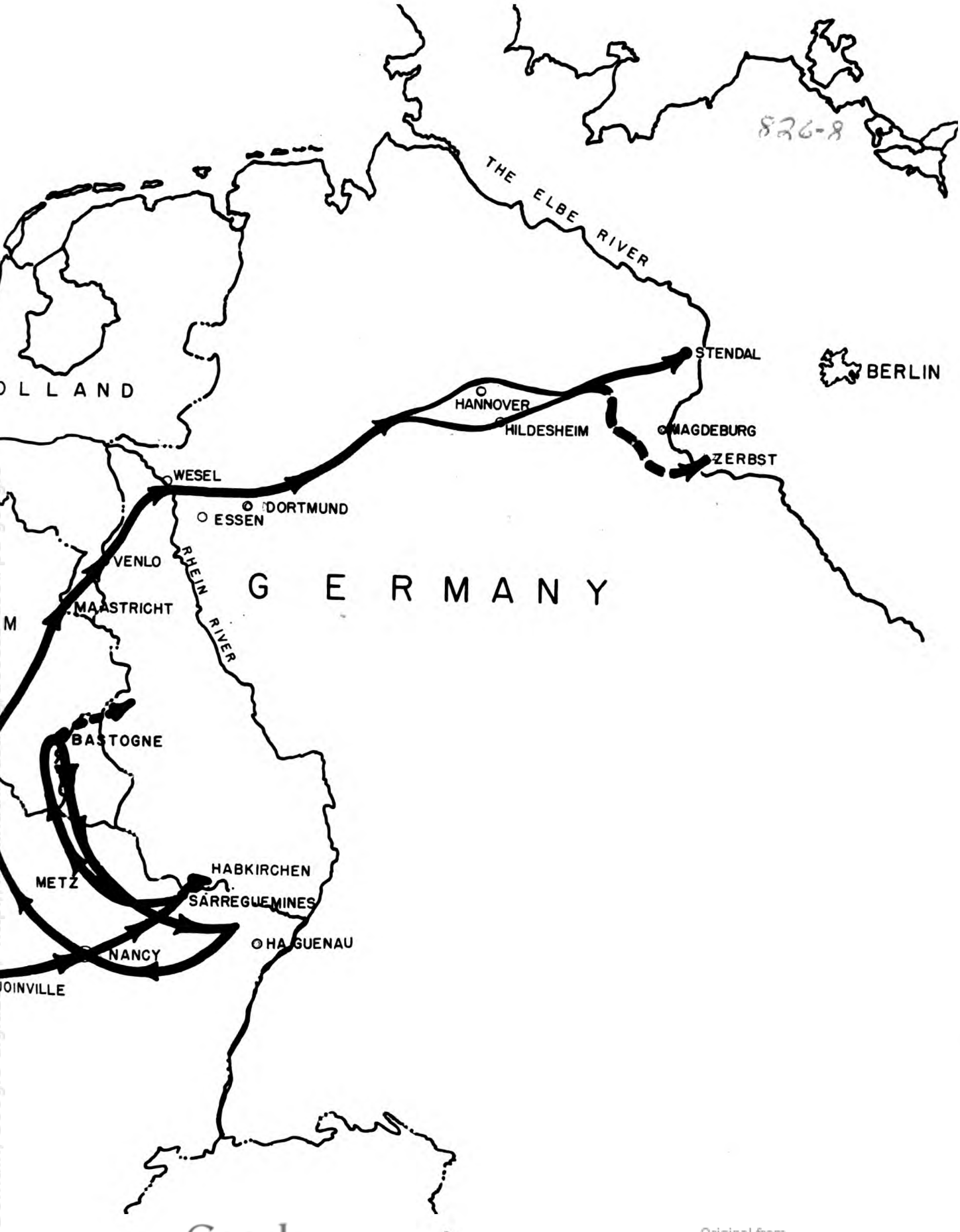
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Ex Libris

MOE BLASKOVICH-XMAS 1946

FROM. HIS UNCLE ~ "ALLEN"

S/SGT. W.A.A. WALKER # 39305760

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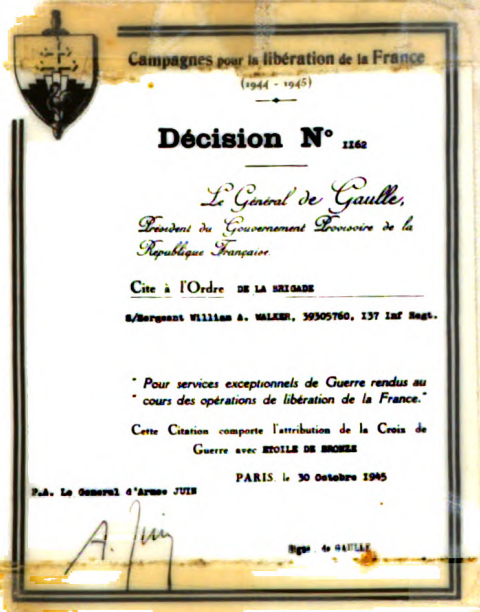
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Presenting


Campagnes pour la libération de la France
(1944 - 1945)

Décision N° 1162

Le Général de Gaulle,
Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Française

Cite à l'Ordre DE LA BRIGADE

S/Sergeant William A. WALKER, 39305760, 137 Inf Regt.

" *Pour services exceptionnels de Guerre rendus au cours des opérations de libération de la France.*"

Cette Citation comporte l'attribution de la Croix de Guerre avec ETOILE DE BRONZE

PARIS le 30 Octobre 1945

P.A. Le General d'Armee JUIN

Sgné de GAULLE

THE 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II 1941-1945



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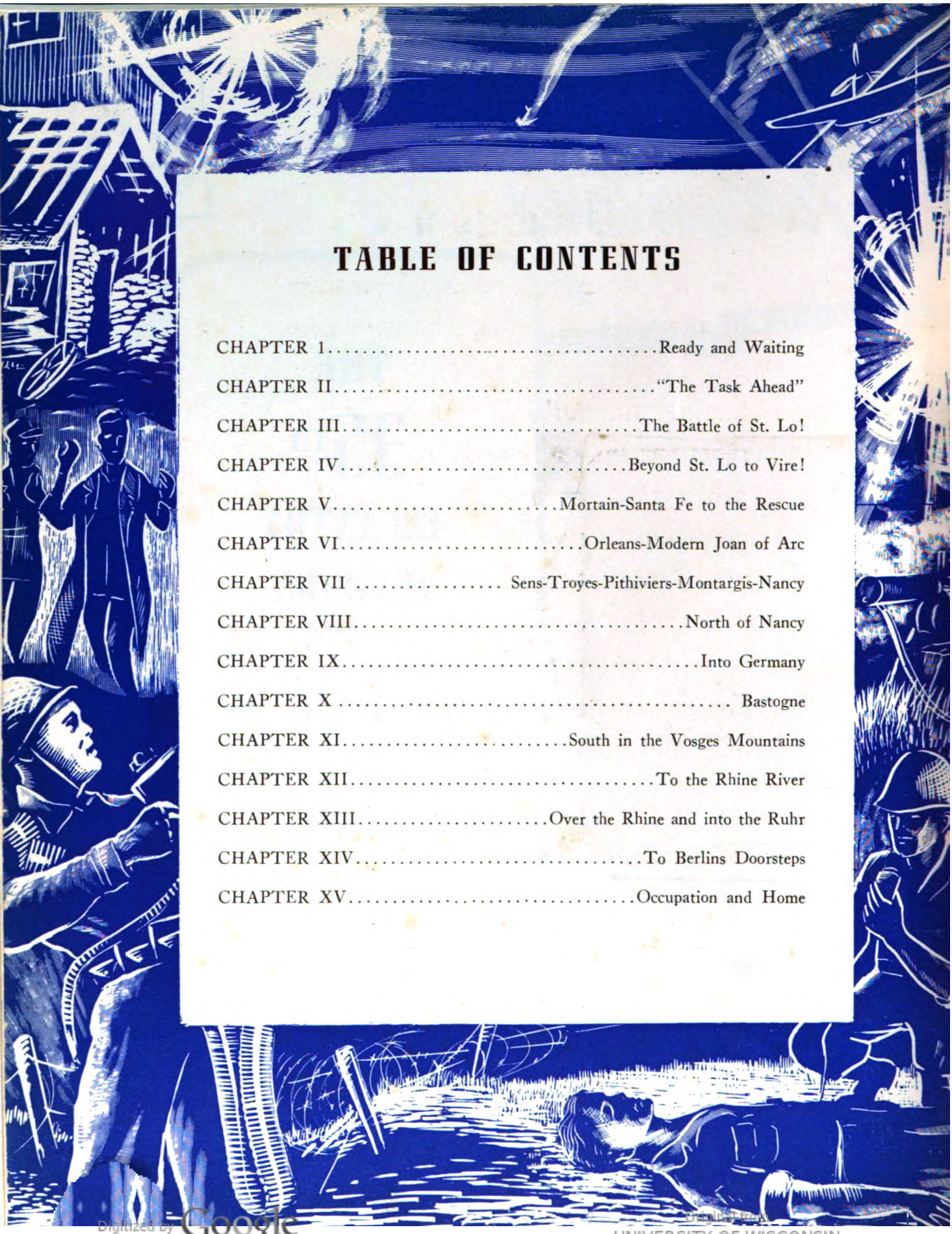


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FEB 3 1976

Dedication

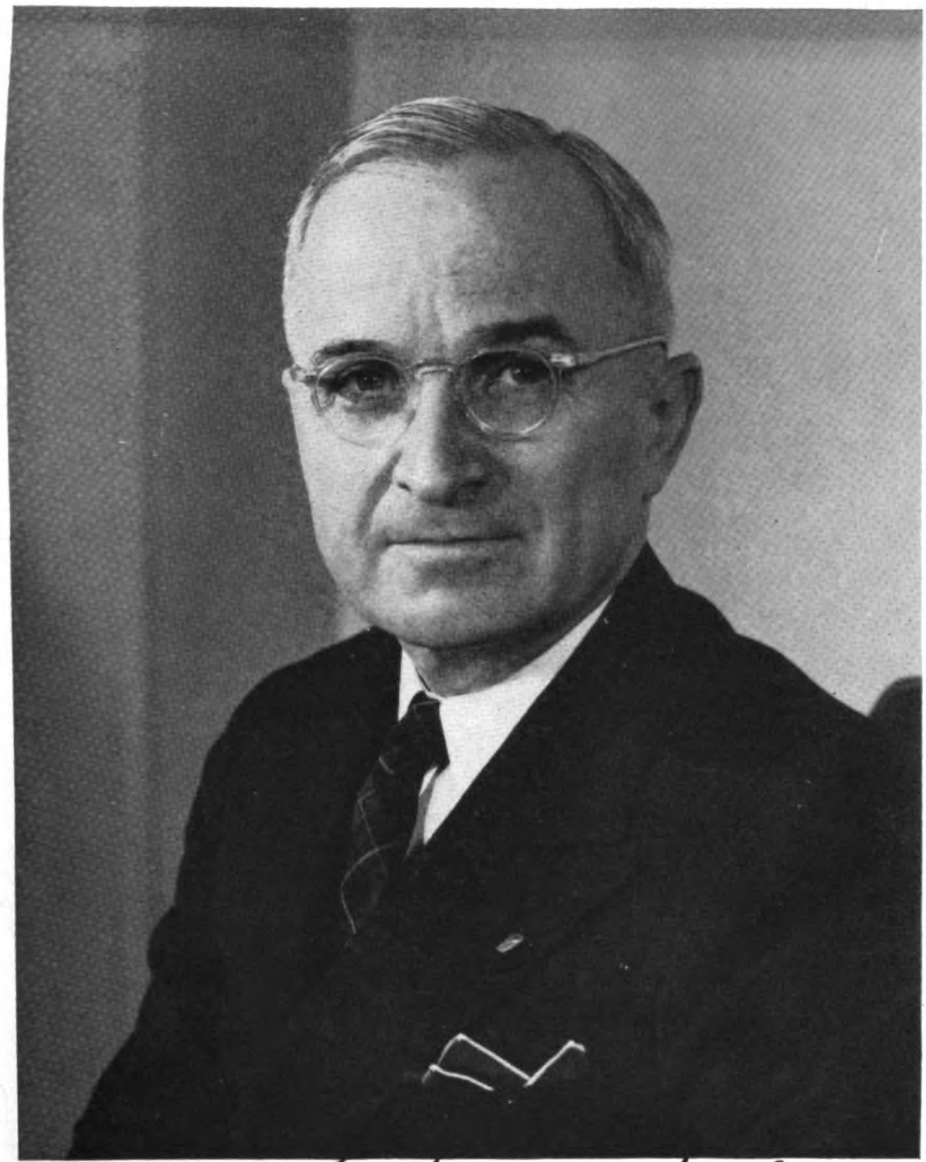
To the brave and valiant comrades of the 35th Infantry Division who gave their lives on the field of battle against the ruthless and tyrannical Nazi foe this volume is respectfully dedicated. And with that dedication goes our pledge for a continuation of the battle for justice and freedom and for the right to achieve the highest aspirations of life. May Almighty God, Our Heavenly Father, be our help and guide.

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HARRY S. TRUMAN

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Former Captain in the 129th F. A. Bn., 35th Div.

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PAUL W. BAADE
MAJOR GENERAL
Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division

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FOREWORD

IF THE HISTORY of the 35th Division could be written in one word, that word would be "attack." Few, if any divisions can claim a record of ten months of almost continuous action, many days of which were in bitter attacks, nor can many divisions claim some 1600 miles of *combat* travel. From the time we landed at Omaha Beach, early in July through St. Lo, the Vire River, Mortain, Orleans, Montargis, Troy, Nancy, Sarreguemines, the Blies River, Bastogne, the lower Vosges, the Roer River, Venlo, Wesel, the Ruhr and on to the Elbe, the division established a record for aggressive action, determination, and the ability to win battles second to none. Such a feat can only be accomplished by careful coordination and the full cooperation of everyone connected therewith, based on plans carefully prepared and carried through to their conclusion.

For our success, full credit is due to an exceptionally smooth functioning staff, to a determined group of commanders who knew but one motto, "advance," and to as fine a group of non-commissioned officers as any unit can boast of. But when all is said and done, the finest staff work and best type of command will fail, if the determination and the will to do of the individual soldier is lacking. I cannot praise too highly the indomitable spirit of our soldiers who withstood the worst that the Germans could offer in shot and shell, as well as the bitterest mud, rain and extreme cold that the weather could produce. This spirit of determination not only pervaded the division and its attached units throughout the operation, but was quickly imbued in all reinforcements that arrived. No better illustration can be offered than the fact that when the division received 2200 replacements in a four day period prior to Christmas Day 1944, and had but one day, Christmas Day to absorb them, these new members became so imbued with the spirit of the division, that within the following ten days, the 35th not only drove the Germans from the Arlon-Bastogne highway, but for four days withstood the withering attack of elements of four of the best divisions the Germans had.

Successful action as fierce and sustained as that in which the 35th Division was engaged, unfortunately, entails a price. We, too, paid that price. The brilliant deeds of those comrades we left behind, of those who will bear the scars of war, as well as the rest of us fortunate enough to return in good health, are indelibly recorded in the pages of history; all members of a proud, aggressive, successful division—heroes every one.

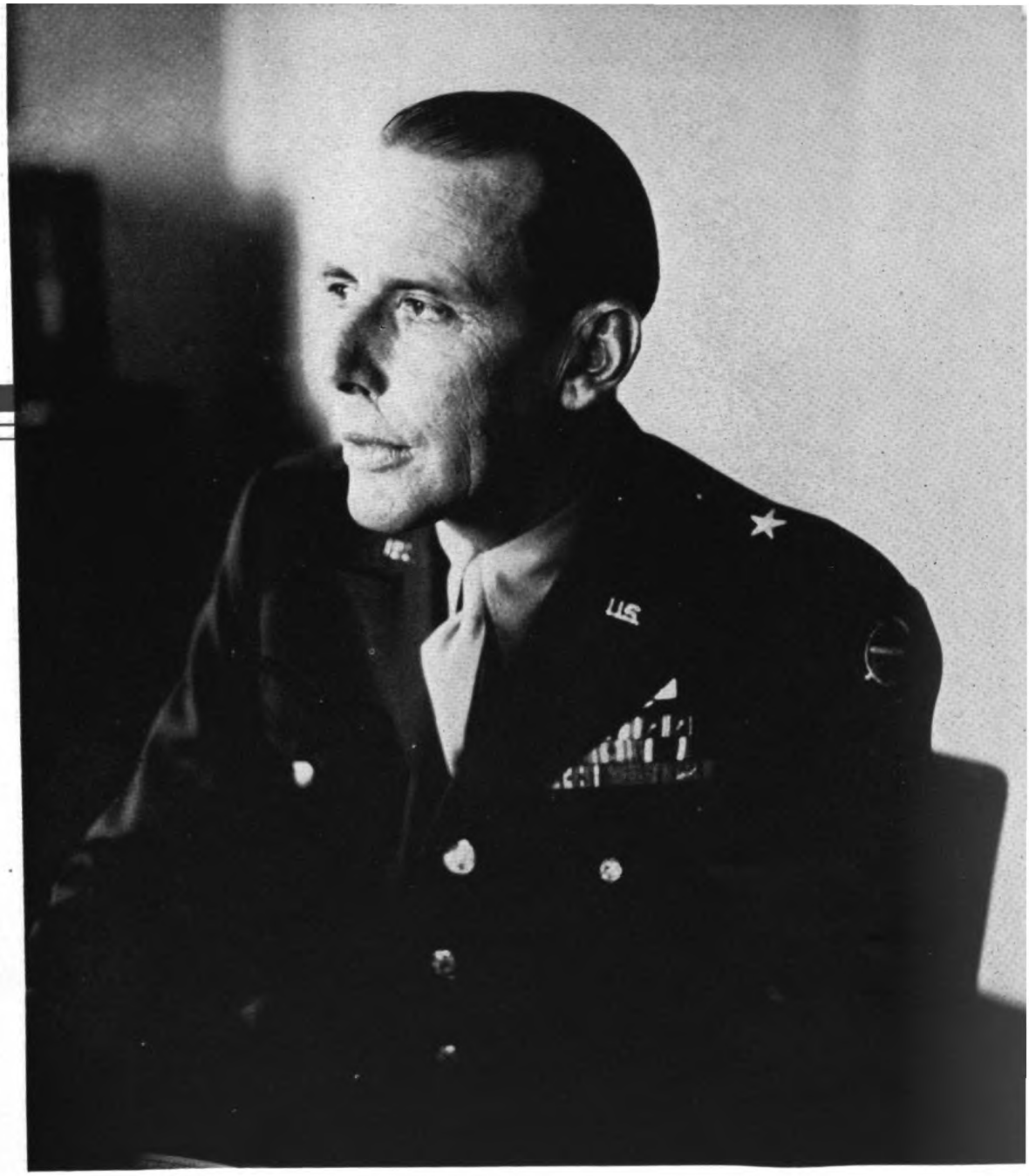
PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. A.
Commanding

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EDMUND B. SEBREE
BRIGADIER GENERAL
Assistant Division Commander
October 1943 to February 1945

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BUTLER M. MILTONBERGER
BRIGADIER GENERAL
Assistant Division Commander
February 1945 to November 1945

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THEODORE L. FUTCH
BRIGADIER GENERAL
Division Artillery Commander

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General Staff



LT. COL. DON ASHLOCK
AC of S G-1



LT. COL. JOHN HOYNE
AC of S G-2



COL. WALTER J. RENFROE, JR.
AC of S G-3



COL. MADDREY A. SOLOMON
Chief of Staff



LT. COL. DELBERT C. LEFLER
AC of S G-4

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PROLOGUE

The 35th Infantry Division is steeped in tradition. The spirit and meaning of its nickname, Santa Fe, is legendary. Many of the organizations that made up the division had their origins in the last century. A number of the units fought in the Indian Wars and helped to open the West. They also served in the Spanish-American War and were with Pershing in the punitive expedition against Mexico.

"That's my old outfit, the 35th!"

It may be in some solid Midwest town or New York's Grand Central Station, but it's the same story. A middle-aged fellow spots the Santa Fe shoulder patch and drifts over to find out what's happened to the division he served with in '17-'18.

Likely he'll mention the distinctive blue and white patch and then hasten to add "I was with the 137th Infantry in the Argonne —a damn good outfit!" . . . or, "I went through last trip with the 110th Medics." For a moment there will be a pause, and his eyes seem to be far away, and you wonder if he's thinking of his old gang. If your memories could follow his, they'd probably see these things. Twelve months training endured in the dusty, weatherbeaten hills around Camp Doniphan in southern Oklahoma. Then, along in spring of 1918 the 35th packed up and was sent overseas to England and France. Frontline training came next followed by move into quiet sectors in the Vosges Mountains under old III Corps or the French.

But the Armistice didn't happen until an affair, called the Meuse-Argonne operation, pushed Fritz back and threatened to cut his main supply artery at Metz. . . . Every 35th veteran remembers the Argonne. . . .

The "old Outfit" was the right flank division of the First Corps of U. S. First Army. It had the job of shoving up a swampy, fog drenched valley—an open section flanked on one side by a forest and on the other by the Aire River and Argonne.

Starting conspicuously, the old 138th Infantry knocked the Germans off formidable Vauquois Hill. Fighting ahead for five days the division was always even with the farthest advance of the whole army.

If he were an infantryman, our "vet" could remember his rations. That was easy —first day, cold field chow; second day, chow from abandoned German kits; third day, water, if lucky; fourth day, nothing; fifth day, nothing. But they fought on, to win.

If an artilleryman, or in any wheeled outfit, he'd never forget the mire he tugged his spokes through to support the advancing

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doughboys. They got hungry, too, but the third day they needed the chow-wagon nags to pull the guns, so they left the chow behind long enough to smack the German in his own "bread-basket."

If he were an engineer he'd probably think of September 29. . . .

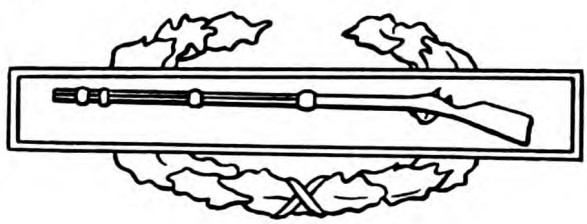
Up front the Germans had hurled their heaviest counter-attacks of the whole front against the Santa Fe Infantry around Exermont.

The 35th had knocked out one enemy division the first two days, fought off and pushed back a Prussian Guard division the next two days, but now they were being hard-pressed by another fresh division, the German 52nd.

An eye-witness of the 35th's Artillery watched part of this scrap near Montrebeau Woods. He tells of hungry, shell-raked, paddle feet men fighting the Heines with nothing but their rifles and a few machine guns they'd taken from the Prussian Guards.

Well, the engineer remembers how he dug in along a strategic ridge, and, when hard pressed elements of the infantry came back, they stood fast, side by side there, and stopped the German Fifty-second cold. At one time 13 Hun batteries were delivering flanking fire into the 35th's positions.

Relieved by the First Division, 30 September, the Santa Fe rested a few days before going back into the line near Verdun to fight until the Armistice under French XVII Corps and U. S. Second Army.



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THE DIVISION PATCH AND ITS HISTORY

IN the middle of the 19th Century, pioneers of a rapidly expanding America pushed their way over a trail they could follow only as they hacked it out, leading the development of the great Western Territory. It became known as the Santa Fe Trail. When the wind blew dust across the plains the trail was often obscured, so the pioneers eventually marked the trail with crosses to guide travelers.

The winning of the Western Territory, with the many hardships, battles against nature and the Indian Wars, was accomplished by pioneers traveling in covered wagons. Since the 35th Division was originally formed in the area of Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska, and in the first World War trained at Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma, near the eastern end of the Santa Fe trail, a shoulder patch was adopted consisting of a white Santa Fe cross upon a wagon wheel with four quadrant projections, symbolizing the courage, ruggedness and pioneer trail-blazing spirit of the people whose descendants form the nucleus of the Division.

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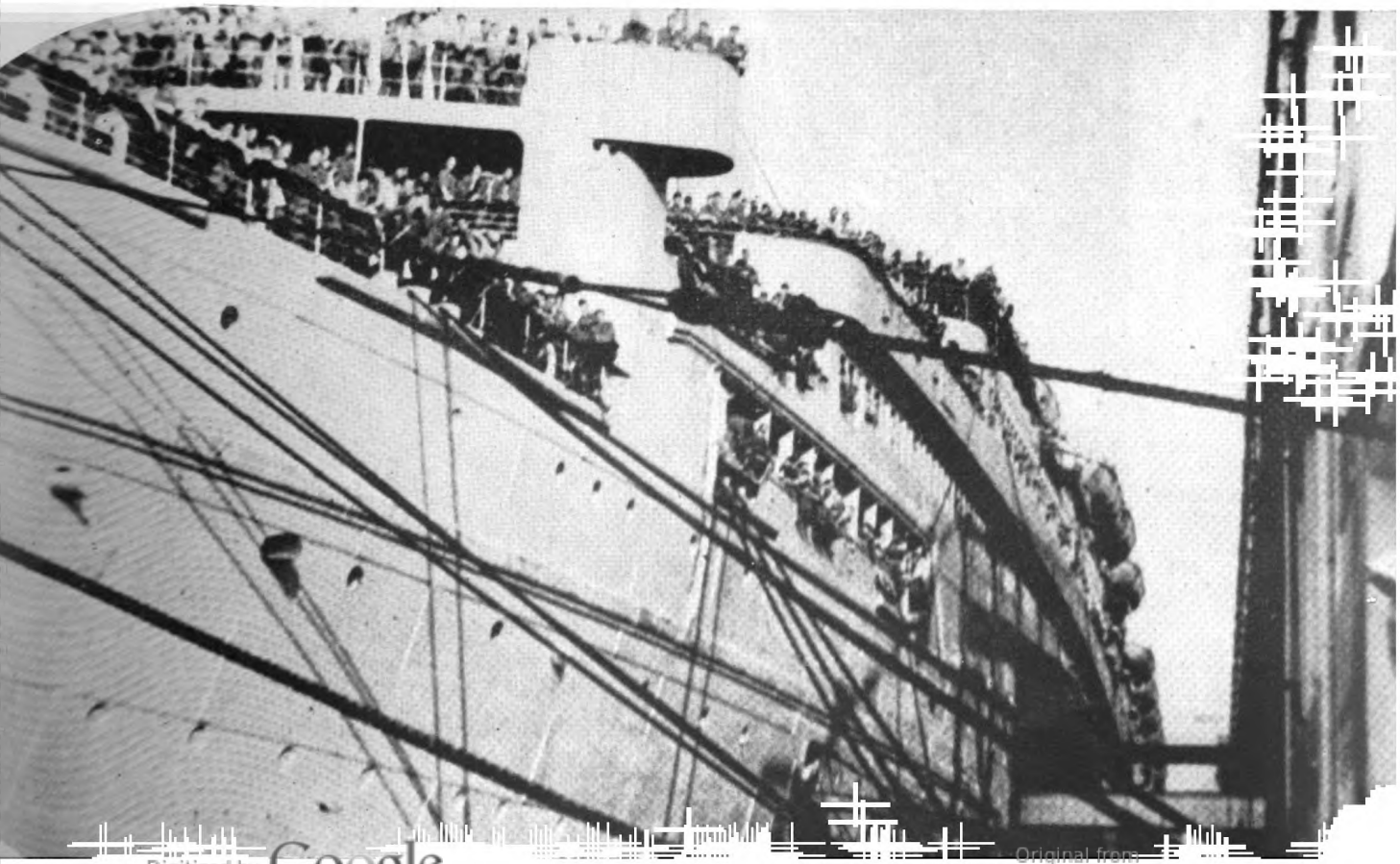
Chapter I

Ready and Waiting

WAR clouds were forming all over the world in the decade preceding 1940, threatening to rain destruction on the peoples of the earth in the global holocaust that was to be World War II. Military leaders of the Allied Nations, with their eyes on the war barometer, saw the need for preparation long before the inevitable conflict. And so, while the world was tensed for war in those bleak, black, ominous days, the President of the United States and Congress started in motion the vast military machine that was to safe-guard our nation.

One of the key cogs in that machinery was the veteran 35th (Santa Fe) Infantry Division. As part of the military foresight of the War Department, the 35th was ordered into Federal Service by Executive Order 8605 on 23 December 1940, almost a full year before the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor.

During the years of peace, the 35th, as units of the Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri National Guard, had stood ready in its vigil for our National security. Now, called into Federal service during the period of free peoples darkest hour, it assembled at Camp



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Joseph T. Robinson, Arkansas, early in January, 1941, for training. Advance work as a unit at the Louisiana Maneuver Area made it almost immediately ready for action. Then, with Pearl Harbor, came its first assignment, the defense of the Southern California Sector of the Western Defense Command.

Spread along the long California coast, the division maintained its unity and quickly won the respect and admiration of the Californians who called it their "adopted Army."

Meanwhile, the War Department was working speedily to schedule its war-winning plans. Already the destiny of the Santa Fe Division was being shaped. On 1 March 1942, came reorganization as a standard triangular division. Then, early in 1943, the various units were assembled at Camp San Luis Obispo, California. Here, for several months, training and reorganization took place. The Army's fast-changing new methods of waging all-out global war were introduced quickly; the officers and men were inculcated with Divisional spirit. The military incubator was hatching one of the roughest, toughest outfits ever to step onto the field of battle.

The entire Division moved to Camp Rucker, Alabama, on 1 April 1943 for advanced training. At the time the components of the Division were substantially the same as those which accompanied it later into the combat zones. These included the following:

Hq. & Hq. Co., 35th Infantry Division.

The 134th Infantry Regiment, which prior to World War I was the 5th Nebraska Infantry and served from 1917 on as the 134th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Division.

The 137th Infantry Regiment, formerly



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the 1st Kansas Infantry, fought with the 35th Infantry Division during World War I.

The 320th Infantry Regiment was activated at Camp San Luis Obispo on 14 January 1943. This Regiment fought as part of the 80th Division during World War I.

The 127th Field Artillery Battalion, formerly the 2nd Battalion of the 127th Field Artillery Regiment, was made up of men from Eastern Kansas. This unit formerly had been the 114th Cavalry Regiment.

The 161st Field Artillery Battalion was formerly part of the 1st Battalion, 161st Field Artillery Regiment.

The 216th Field Artillery Battalion was organized 6 January 1943 with an initial cadre of officers and enlisted men from the 161st Field Artillery Battalion.

The 219th Field Artillery Battalion was activated 12 January 1943 with a cadre of officers and enlisted men from the 130th Field Artillery Battalion originally of the Kansas National Guard.

The 60th Engineer Combat Battalion was activated 29 January 1943 at Camp San Luis Obispo, California.

The 110th Medical Battalion was reorganized from the 110th Sanitary Train, Nebraska National Guard Medical Regiment, 35th Division, and the 117th Sanitary Train, 42nd Division.

The 35th Quartermaster Company was a part of the 110th Quartermaster Regiment, Nebraska National Guard.

The 35th Division Military Police Platoon was activated 23 December 1940 at Garden City, Kansas.

The 35th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop was activated 1 March 1942 at Camp San Luis Obispo, California.

The 735th Ordnance Company was activated 15 November 1942 and consisted of men from Kansas and Nebraska.

The 35th Signal Company was activated 24 December 1940 and consisted of men from Kansas City, Kansas.

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The men who trained with the Santa Fe at Camp Rucker will long remember those days. The combat ranges and battle courses gave the men rigorous and thorough training. The division was taking shape as a top-notch fighting team.

By November 1943, the Santa Fe was considered sufficiently trained to participate in the Tennessee maneuvers. It was cold and wet and under the most unfavorable weather conditions the Division engaged in two months of realistic battle problems, two months of conditioning for combat that earned the 35th the commendation of the Second Army directors of the exercises.

Following the completion of the eight phases of the Tennessee maneuvers, the Division moved to Camp Butner, North Carolina, on 18 January 1944 for its final polishing. Combat Teams 134th and 137th went to West Virginia to attend cliff-scaling schools and take mountain training, in the West Virginia Maneuver Area. After four months of putting the finishing touches to its leashed potentialities, the units of the Santa Fe, during the first week of May, 1944, moved into the staging area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. A final, thorough inspection of the men and equipment by Port of Embarkation officials and the 35th was ready to sail, ready to assemble with the gathering Allied forces to uncork its power when the word was given to attack.

An Advance Detachment, under the command of Brigadier General Edmund B. Sebree, Assistant Division Commander, sailed from Fort Hamilton on 20 April aboard the SS Queen Elizabeth. The party consisted of 54 officers, one warrant officer and 69 enlisted men. The ship docked at Greennock, Scotland, on 27 April 1944.

Debarking the next day, the detachment entrained for a 21 hour ride to Okehampton where they remained from 30 April to 20 May making arrangements for the reception of the division.



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On 12 May 1944, three transports, the SS Edmund B. Alexander, SS General A. E. Anderson and the SS Thomas H. Berry, carrying the main body of the division as part of a mighty convoy steamed out of the Port of New York. The ships, and the units they carried, were:

SS EDMUND B. ALEXANDER

Hq. & Hq. Co., 35th Inf. Div.
320th Infantry Regt.
35th Reconnaissance Troop
Special Troops Medical Det.
127th F. A. Bn.
216th F. A. Bn.
35th Signal Co.

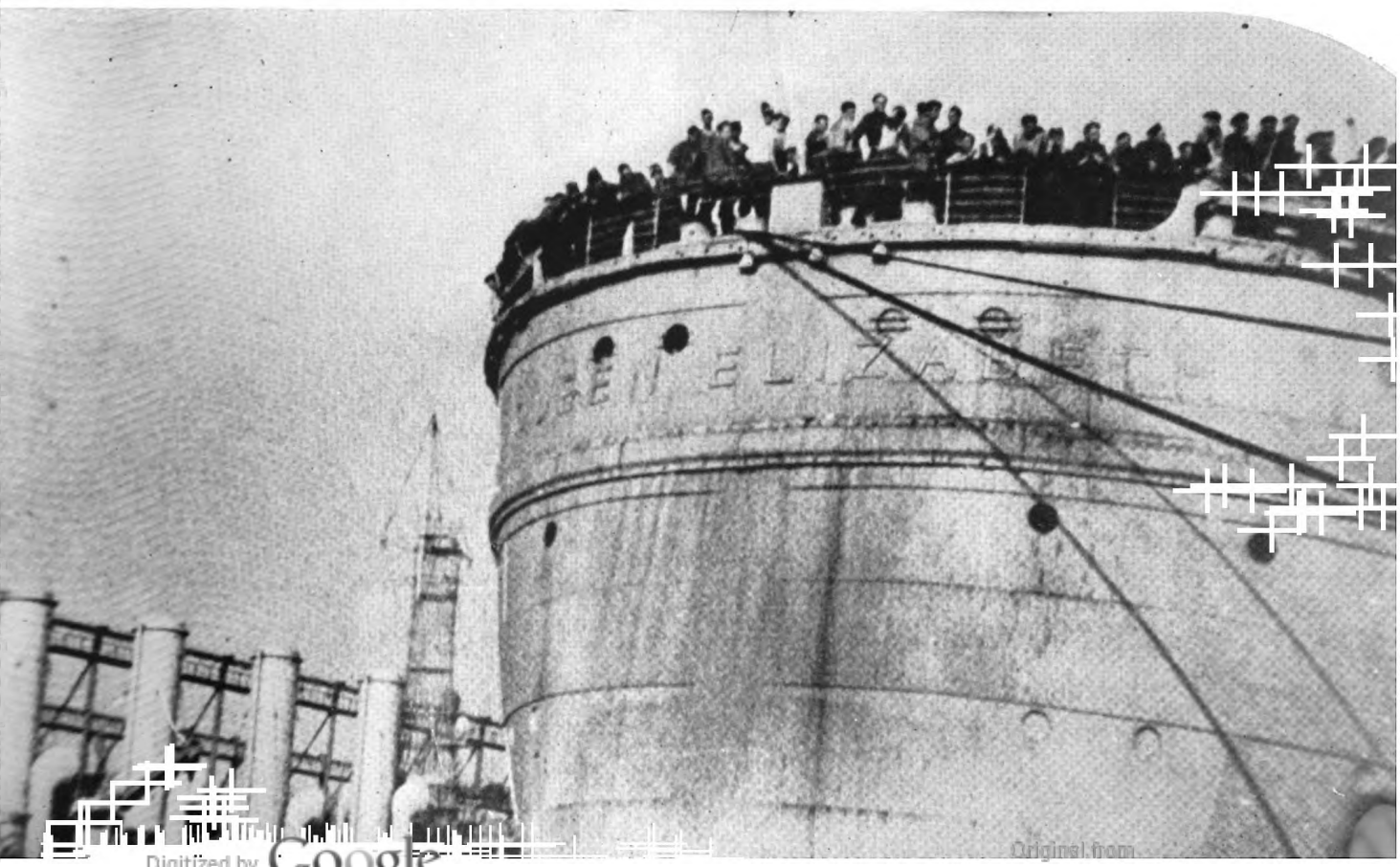
SS GENERAL A. E. ANDERSON

Hq. & Hq. Btry., 35th Div. Arty.
35th Div. MP Platoon
35th Div. Band
60th Engineer (C) Bn.
134th Infantry Regt.
161st F. A. Bn.
219th F. A. Bn.

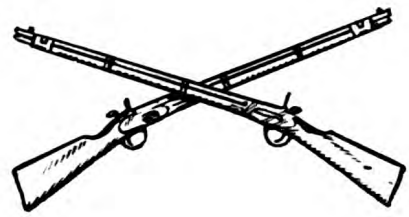
SS THOMAS H. BERRY

137th Infantry Regt.
35th Quartermaster Co.
735th Ordnance Co.
110th Medical Bn.

ADVANCE PARTY



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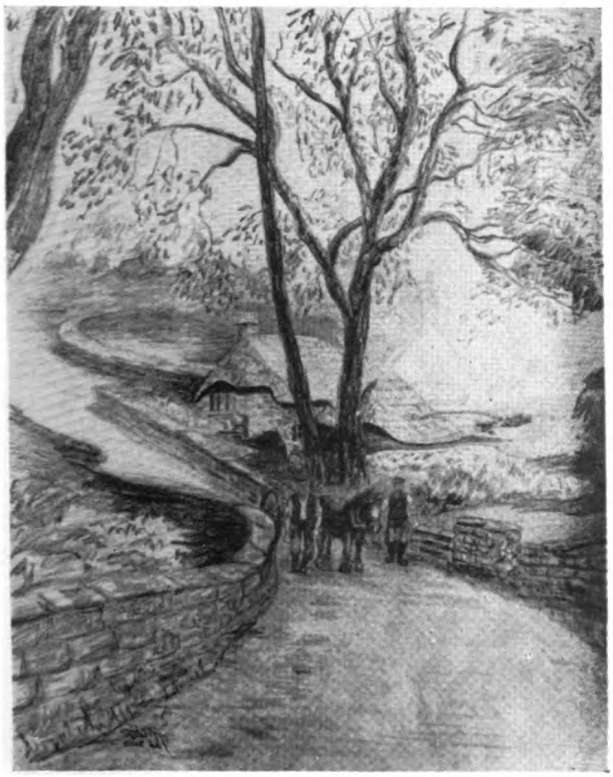
CHAPTER II

"The Task Ahead"

ON 25 May 1944, Major General Paul W. Baade stepped ashore in the city of Liverpool, England. The 35th Infantry Division was in the European Theater of Operations to do their part in World War II. Behind 3,000 miles of ocean were the conjectures, the hopes and rumors that characterized training camp possibilities. Behind were endless hours of tireless training, trials, counter-trials and experimentation. Here there were no exasperating dry runs and rehearsals. Now the Santa Fe was in England where the great scars of the enemy's ruthless bombing raids were still in gaping evidence. From here on there could be no misfires, no stoppages, no trials. Here there was no margin for error. The sum and total of all that had been learned in the training camps must now be given its battle test. Beginning with this moment it was necessary to be deadly certain of the objectives. On actions alone would depend the success of the Division.



"Peace in England"

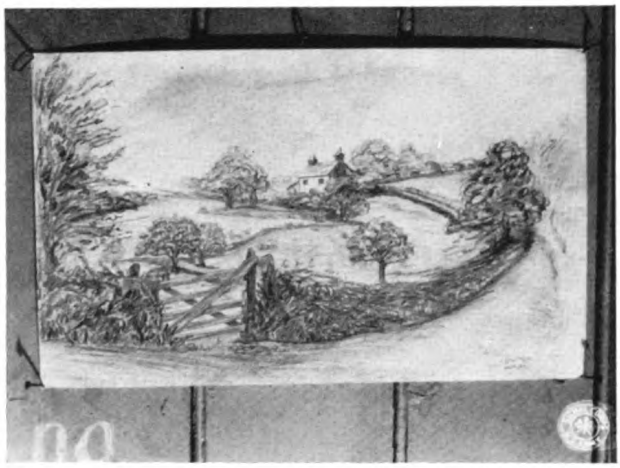


"We Will Fight Them on the Roads"

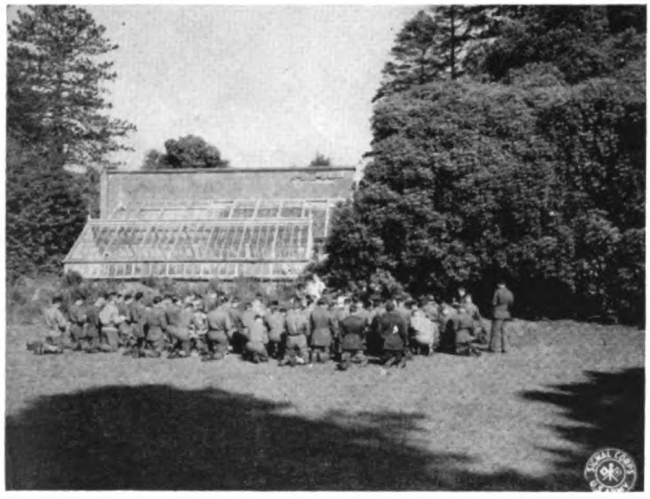
By 27 May 1944, all the units had been disembarked and all felt better now that land was under their feet. To most of the officers and men each moment would bring new thrills, new sights and new experiences. From the moment they dragged their loaded duffel bags off the ships and boarded the strange English trains, they gawked and gazed. This was England, the land that had carried the war for five years, the land of a courageous people.

The trip across the country, from the ports of debarkation to the destinations in southern England, was filled with thrills and sights. There were the green country-side, the roll-

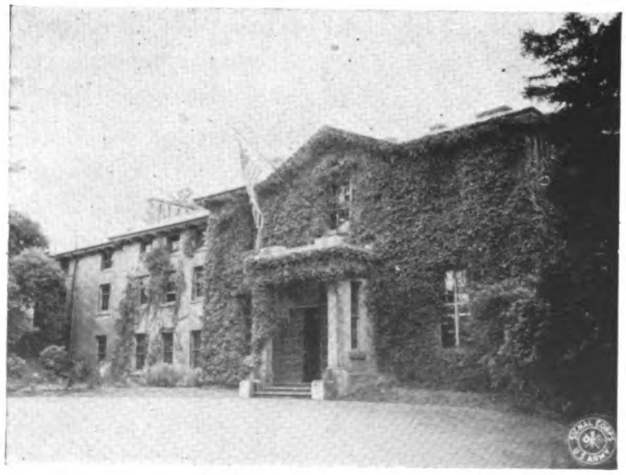
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"Kansas in England"



"Catholic Mass at Div. C. P., Tavistock, England"



"35th's Tavistock Headquarters"

ing hills and the deep glens, the forests, the little streams winding their picturesque ways, the criss-crossing hedges and beauties of the narrow twisting roads, the like of which had never been seen before except in the movies or in pictures.

There were the tiny homes, gabled and quaint, each with its different design and construction. There were the clean, neat cities and towns, cities as calm and precise as an Englishman, cities that bore the mute and stark skeletons of once beautiful homes and churches bombed into tragic rubble.

These marks of the enemy were viewed with a strange feeling; these pillars pock-marked with the bullet holes of machine gun; these open spaces from which buildings had been wiped by ruthless enemy aircraft. For the first time each member of the Division realized that he was pitted against a brutal and determined force which gave no quarter in its campaign to subdue all free men. But looking at these calm English people, still maintaining their civilization and culture, the men gained a new courage. They made individual resolutions that this sort of devastation would never happen to America. They had sworn to defend the United States, and in the words of the Commander-in-Chief, soldiers of the 35th intended to "hit the enemy wherever he could be found."

D-Day of the invasion of Europe was almost at hand and England was crowded to its peak with American soldiers. There remained no camp at which the entire Division might be reasonably accommodated. The various units had to be quartered in different places.

The 134th Infantry Regiment's Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the Service Company were quartered at the Pendarves and Clowance Estates in Camborne; the Anti-Tank Company went to far Land's End, the Cannon Company to the

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Tregullow Estate at Redruth. The 1st Battalion went to Penzance, reminiscent of Gilbert and Sullivan, and the 2nd Battalion, minus Company H, went to St. Ives. Company H went to nearby Hayle. The 3rd Battalion was quartered at Prah Sands, with the exception of Companies I, K and L which went to Lizard Point, Marazion and the Penrose Estate in Porthleven, as named.

The 320th Infantry Regiment found quarters at the Topsham Barracks, near Exeter, with the exception of the 3rd Battalion and the Anti-Tank Company at Newton Abbott and the Cannon Company at Showgrounds Camp in Okehampton with the 216th Field Artillery Battalion. Company L went to Bovey Tracey and Company K went to Bishopsteignton.

The 60th Engineer (C) Battalion had its Headquarters and Service Company at Wadebridge; Company A at Padstow, Company B at Trevone Bay and Company C at Harlyn Bay.

The 110th Medical Battalion was quartered at Poor Law Institute in Bodmin, and Headquarters and Companies A and D were distributed between the Kendall Building, Fore Street and the Methodist Church, Pool Street, in Bodmin, while Company B made its quarters at Town Arms, Fore Street, also in Bodmin.

The 161st Field Artillery Battalion was billeted at Parranporth, and the 127th Field Artillery Battalion stayed at beautiful Bake House.

Division Headquarters was established at the old town of Tavistock. Here, too, went the Headquarters Company, Headquarters Special Troops, the MP Platoon and Band, and the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery of the Division Artillery. The 35th Quartermaster Company was at the Scarne Cross Camp at Launceston with the 35th Reconnaissance Troop. The 35th Signal



"Thatched Roof"



"Ike visits Santa Fe"

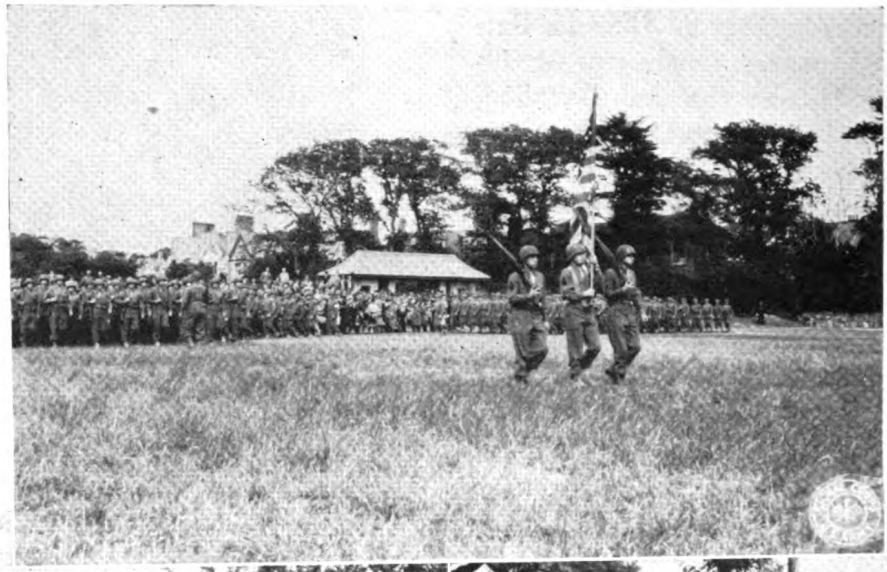


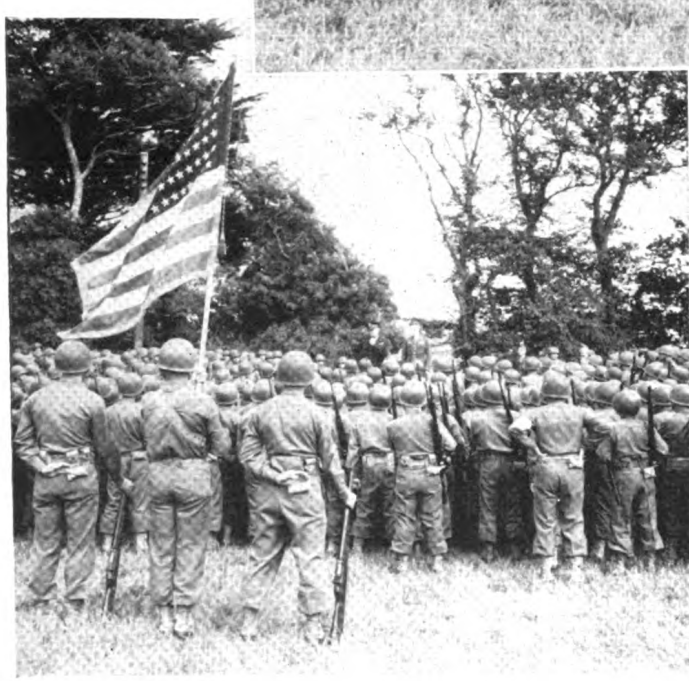
"Town Square, Tavistock"

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"Formal Review"





"Gen. Ike addresses Santa Fe troops"



"Gen. Ike poses with 35th Band"

Company went to Bere Alston, while Bodmin played host to the 735th Ordnance Company, the 137th Infantry Regiment (less the 1st and 2nd Battalions at Newquay), and the 219th Field Artillery Battalion.

The 137th Regiment Headquarters was established in the structure that formerly housed the Duke of Cornwall and the place was still rich with the lore and ghosts of the Revolutionary War. Even the uniforms of that day were still in evidence. Other outfits of the 35th found themselves quartered or stationed in equally romantic and historical spots such as in Newquay where some lived in the home of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes.

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"Do tell!"



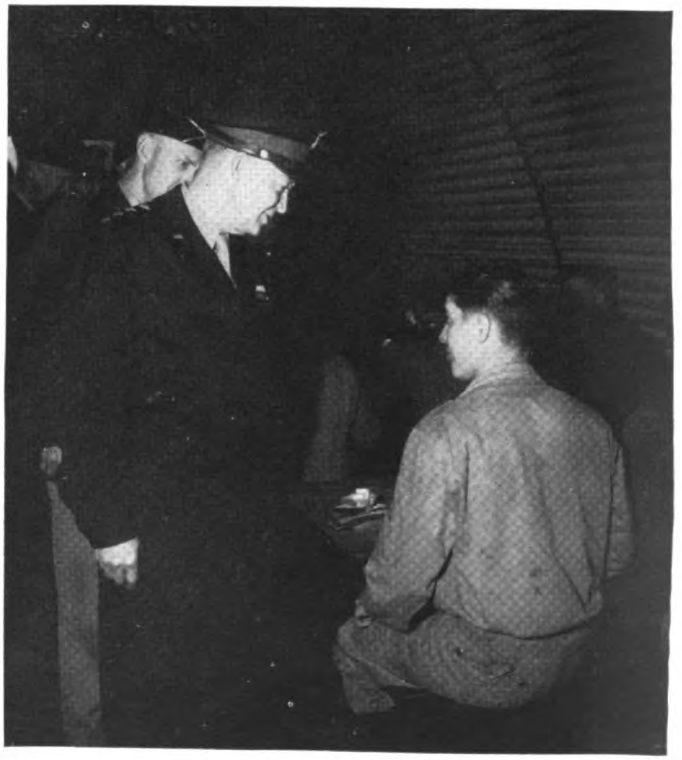
"That's right, it's the best"



"Are you from Kansas?"



"May proudly she wave"



"How's chow?"

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"Ready, Sir!"



"I see"

At this time the Division was assigned to the XV Corps which was a part of the United States Third Army, commanded by Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr.

D-Day, 6 June 1944, found the 35th Infantry Division entering its final phase of preparation.

Special combat equipment poured in. The troops attended special schools such as enemy order of battle, enemy firearms courses, loading courses, chemical, mine and boobytrap schools. Last minute details as to the immediate combat mission ahead were studied.

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There were short maneuvers for some to determine the readiness of the Division for combat.

The Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, General Dwight D. Eisenhower and the 3rd Army Commander, General Patton, honored the Division with an inspection visit on 25 June.

General Eisenhower made his appearance at 0910 at Exeter, where the 320th Infantry Regiment was assembled in the quadrangle of Higher Barracks. After formal honors had been received, he made a short talk and inspected the troops at Okehampton and observed the 127th Field Artillery Battalion calibrating its guns and operating their fire direction center. He observed other battalions preparing for service practice, and later inspected the 216th Field Artillery Battalion area. At noon he lunched at the Manor House in Tavistock as the guest of General Baade.

Launceston was General Eisenhower's next stop, where he observed the 35th Quartermaster Company and the 35th Reconnaissance Troop waterproofing their vehicles.

At 1425 he arrived in Bodmin where the 137th Infantry Regiment, the 110th Medical Battalion and the 735th Ordnance Company were quartered. Here he observed a Battalion Command Post Exercises in attack, Company I at small unit work, Anti-Tank Platoon and Cannon Platoon in gun drill, an Evasion and Escape lecture, and an assembly of elements of the Medical Battalion and units of the infantry regiment. He addressed the troops and inspected them by walking among them. Then he drove through the 137th's motor pool and the 735th Ordnance shops.

At 1645 he appeared at the Hayle Range, seven miles from Cambourne and watched squads of the 3rd Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment firing combat problems. He ended his visit by witnessing a formal retreat parade by the 1st Battalion, 134th Infantry, at Penzance.

The Supreme Commander was satisfied that the 35th was in condition to carry the attack to the enemy. A few days later there came an alert order that hastened waterproofing and loading tasks. In the early days of July came orders to move to the marshalling areas.

On 2 July, the 134th Infantry was ordered to the Plymouth area, on 4 July, the 137th moved to the Plymouth and Falmouth areas, and the 320th Infantry reported to the area near British Cassini. Division Headquarters, Special Troops and the Artillery Battalions moved to the Weymouth area on 5 July.

As the LCI, LCT and LST craft bore the 35th over the choppy waters of the English Channel there were varied thoughts in the minds of all the soldiers. But in each heart there sparked a firm intent to defeat the enemy.

The first elements of the Division arrived at Omaha Beach in the vicinity of Cooleville-Sur-Mere at 1500 on 5 July. These were men of the 134th Infantry Regiment under Brigadier General (then Colonel) Butler B. Miltonberger. They viewed with determination as did those who arrived later, this sacred piece of land where so many Americans made the supreme sacrifice in opening the wedge into the enemy's line. Here they were amazed, too, at the progress which had been made, the difficulties which had been overcome by the engineering elements of the Army and Navy, and the beehive-activity throughout the entire area.

By the afternoon of 7 July, all troops had been landed and registered in the transit area. The Division then moved to a concentration area about two miles west of Colombieres. In the meantime it had been attached to the great fighting force that had battled its way onto the Continent and was now driving inland, the XIX Corps under Major General

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"Maybe"

Gen. Ike inspects F. A. Unit

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"Getting enough to eat?"

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Charles H. Corlett, a part of the First Army under the leadership of Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley.

Already the Army and Corps officials were in conference with the Division leaders: General Baade; Brigadier General E. B. Sebree, Assistant Division Commander; Brigadier General Theodore L. Futch, Division Artillery Commander, and Colonel Maddrey A. Solomon, Division Chief of Staff.

The Corps Commander desired the 35th's immediate commitment to battle. The expanding front lines presented an area in which the Santa Fe fighting quality and recognized power could be used. The 35th was to have the honor of fighting side by side with the already famed 29th Division. On 8 July at 1545 the 2nd Battalion of the 134th Infantry entered the front lines in the vicinity of St. Nicholas and relieved the 2nd Battalion of the 120th Infantry Regiment. The enemy was the veteran German 629th Infantry Regiment.

Liaison was established with the 448th Anti-Aircraft Automatic Weapon Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Floyd Eason, Roanoke, Virginia, which had been attached to the Division.

The 35th's first fire was by Company H, 134th Infantry, commanded by Captain Charles C. Hake, North Platte, Nebraska, against a machine gun nest and mortar position. It was successful. In a direct hit, the emplacement was destroyed and four of the six enemy soldiers were killed. Those responsible for firing this first round were: Lieutenant Robert Newton, Platoon Commander, Long Beach, California; Captain



"It's going to be tough fighting"

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"Open ranks"

Charles Hake, Company Commander, North Platte, Nebraska; S/Sgt. Victor Peterson, Platoon Sergeant, Nebraska City, Nebraska; S/Sgt Virgil H. Mesmke, Section Leader, Norfolk, Nebraska; S/Sgt Dale Steckel, Squad Leader, Fullerton, Nebraska.

The first round of artilllery was fired at 2051, 9 July by B Battery of the 216th Field Artillery Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth H. Reed of Horton, Kansas. Captain Jasse G. Beattie of Sumner, Nebraska, was Battery Commander and the lanyard was pulled by Pfc. Ralph Thompson of Trinity, Alabama.

The gun crew was under the supervision of the Chief of Section, Sgt. Wyman A. Fricke of Stratford, Missouri, and consisted of the following cannoneers:

Gunner—Cpl. William R. Urguhart, Buena Vista, Ga.

No. 1—Pfc. Ralph Thompson, Trinity, Ala.

No. 2—Pvt. Cecil Thompson, Trinity, Ala.

No. 3—Pvt. Carl H. Cook, Tuliare, Ala.

No. 4—Pvt. William H. Cochran, Fayetteville, Ga.

No. 5—Pvt. Merlin R. Shirey, Carrollton, Ga.

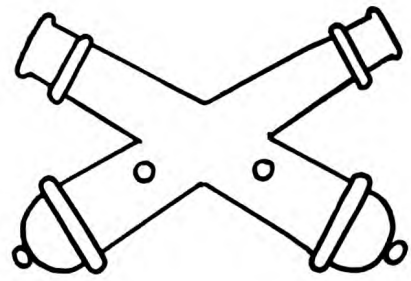
No. 6—Pvt. Edward Culpepper, Columbus, Ga.

No. 7—Pvt. Arthur W. Cummings, Lackawanna, N. Y.

The first round of M-1 rifle ammunition was fired at the Germans by Lieutenant Colonel Denver Wilson, North Platte, Nebraska, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, 134th Infantry.

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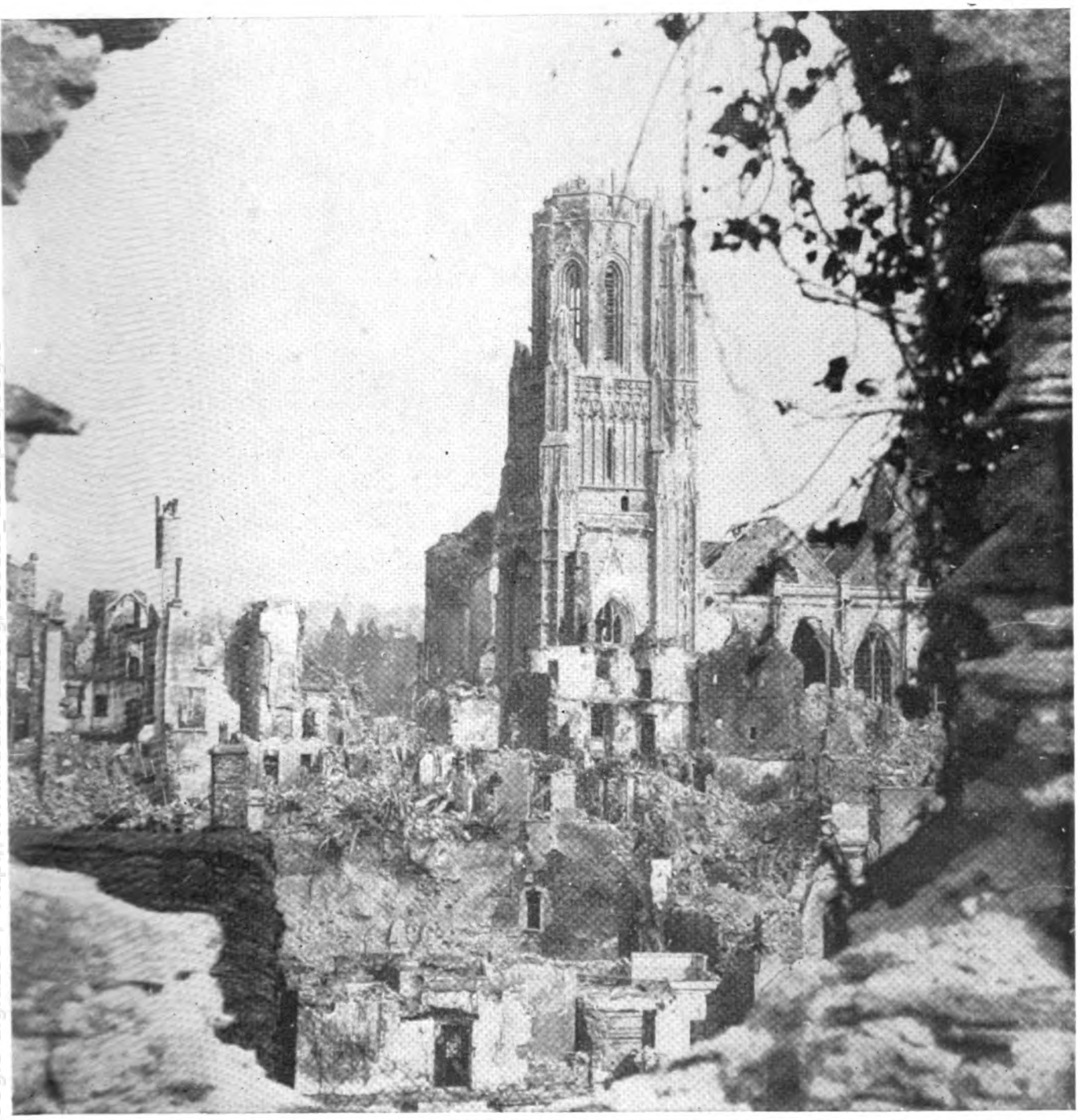
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CHAPTER III



NORMANDY CAMPAIGN - 5 JULY 44 - 24 JULY 44

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CHAPTER III

The Battle of St. Lo

LOCATED immediately astride the center of the base of the Cotentin Peninsula, the City of St. Lo forms, with Caen, the anchor of a transportation and communication line that controls not only the section itself, but the highways to the French interior. The third largest city on the peninsula, St. Lo was well built, full of the ancient landmarks that make each French town revered, and included a number of buildings of modern design and accommodations. It was seated in a gooseneck of the River Vire and occupied the center of a natural saucer-like basin.

However, it was not the physical position of St. Lo itself that made its capture a difficult matter. Rather it was the contour and nature of the terrain which approached it. Most of Normandy is covered with rolling land that in itself affords excellent opportunities for defense. In developing this land for pasture and farming purposes, the French had transposed it into a vast checkerboard of fields and meadows, each bordered by hedgerows.

These hedgerows, ran along the edge of each field, and were from five to thirty feet in height, depending on the amount of vegetation that covered it. The bases of the

Church Services in St. Lo



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"BIRDMAN'S VIEW OF HELL"
Aerial photos showing terrain and hedgerows characteristic of Normandy

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hedgerows were mounds of thickly-packed rocks and earth that had risen with the years. In some places these mounds had attained a height of five feet. Topping these bases were all forms of growth from tall thickets and bushes to large age-gnarled trees. This is lush land, and the thickness and density of it formed a cover and concealment that no man could have devised.

But nature had been even more designing in her construction of these barriers. At the bottom of each hedgerow, on each side, were narrow trenches of varying depths. These, with a little help from man, provided excellent foxholes, machine gun and mortar emplacements and excellent screening for sniping parties. The Germans exploited these natural embankments to the utmost.

Just what the history of these hedgerows was; how they came to be there; why they were so universally present in this country; what their original use was, must remain a matter of speculation. Some declare they were primitive forms of irrigation; others that they were mere landmarks the years had built by natural erosion and growth. The more romantic observers picture them as defenses thrown up by the ancient Normans before the days of howitzers and bazookas. But, regardless of why and how, the cold fact remained that they were there, and covered the miles to St. Lo at an average of a few hundred yards apart. Caesar had written of this type of hedgerow and said, "they present a fortification like a wall through which it was not only impossible to enter but even to penetrate with the eye." Behind each one was the dread unknown, the hidden enemy armed with all the weapons at his command, especially designed for this type of fighting and dug in to safely counter American fire. To drive the enemy from these defenses, to blast him from the reinforced and heavily bastioned forts he had constructed in each solid-walled farmhouse and church, was a task calculated to test the bravest. The immediate objective of the XIX Corps was the capture of the city of St. Lo.

On the night of 9 July, General Baade issued Field Order No. 2 which directed the 137th and 320th Infantry Regiments to enter battle positions relieving elements of the 29th



G2 tent, St. Lo sector, France

35th Inf., fresh from England, moves up to line



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35th Inf. GI sharpens bayonet in Normandy



and 30th Infantry Divisions in the vicinity of La Meauffe. The line ran from the River Vire above La Meauffe and extended in a southeastwardly direction through La Riviere to La Nicollerie. The 137th, taking positions on the right, covered the area on the East bank of the River Vire to the vicinity of Le Carrillon. To the left the 320th was deployed. In support of the infantry were the artillery battalions and the other various troops of the Santa Fe.

The 29th Division, still battling after having forced its beachhead landing and fighting its way inland, was on the left flank. The 30th Division, on the right, was on the other bank of the Vire. Their attack was synchronized with the 35th's.

On the night of 10 July the Division received its first casualty from enemy fire. At 1920, while Company H of the 137th was moving into position, eight rounds of 88mm artillery fire were poured into the area. One was a direct hit into the foxhole occupied by



"Champaigne and C. P." on the bank of the Vire River, La Meauffe



Engineers demolish house in path of the new road in Port Herbert, north of St. Lo

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35th Inf. at La Meauffe

"Yanks take a look"





"Desecrated"—the Nazis used this church as a strong point

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Private Owen J. McBride, an ammunition bearer. He was killed instantly.

At 0500, 11 July, the Division and supporting Corps artillery opened fire on the Nazis. Over 200 guns smashed at the German-prepared positions for one hour. Then at 0600 the Santa Fe doughboys went "over the top."

The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 137th, with Company G in reserve, proceeded along the area following Highway 3. Here the enemy had taken full advantage of the narrow roads and hedgerow defenses. Knowing that contact would have to be made along a small road leading from Highway 3 to the Vire Canal, they lined both sides with deep foxholes which were manned with well-armed riflemen, grenadiers and machine guns. Underground tunnels connected these emplacements so that there would be no diminution of ammunition or men. Mines had been skillfully placed in the road at points where attacking forces were certain to approach.

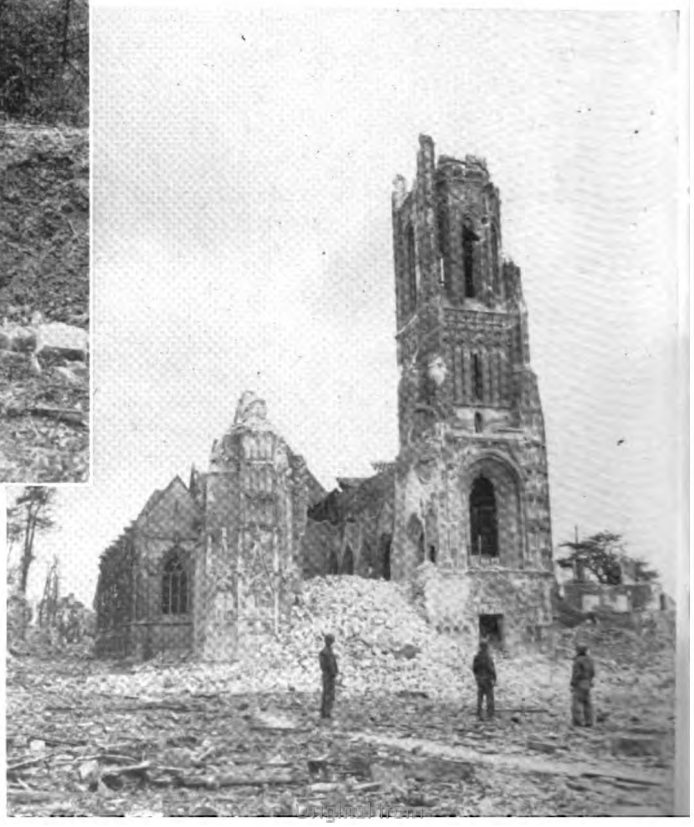
Despite the murderous crossfire the men maintained their attack and advanced up the road, though but a few yards at a time. Many of the points had to be rushed and taken with hand-to-hand combat. Cold steel and pointblank fire had to finish the Nazis who held out to the end. The cost was not light. Many gallant Yanks fell, some never to rise. That narrow stretch of road is remembered by men of the 137th as "Death Valley Road."

At La Meauffe every house and shop had been converted by the Germans into individual pillboxes. From behind hastily constructed barricades they poured forth streams of hot bullets and flesh-ripping grenades. But the Infantry did not falter. With full con-



"Jerry was here"—View of dug-out that supported German strong point at La Meauffe

St. Lo's Cathedral of Notre Dame



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"No service today"

fidence in the precision of their artillery, they advanced steadily behind each well placed salvo and wiped out the nests of resistance.

Battling against fierce resistance, smashing through entrenched positions, the men moved up the main road to famed "Purple Heart Corner." Here, in a solid stone chateau, behind a seven foot granite wall, had been the Gestapo Headquarters. The Germans had studded it with machine guns which covered the road with withering fire. More Santa Fe men fell. But the steady advance was not to be stopped. By now the Santa Fe's troops had tasted battle. The initial nervousness and fear that besets each man in combat had lost its newness. The Boche, they had discovered, was not an impregnable superman. He was a good fighter, but the doughboys had taken the best he had to offer and had driven him back.

Despite the loss of ground and many prepared positions, the enemy continued to fight stubbornly. A few hundred yards down the road, beyond "Purple Heart Corner," was

This is St. Lo



He still stands—French monument at St. Lo



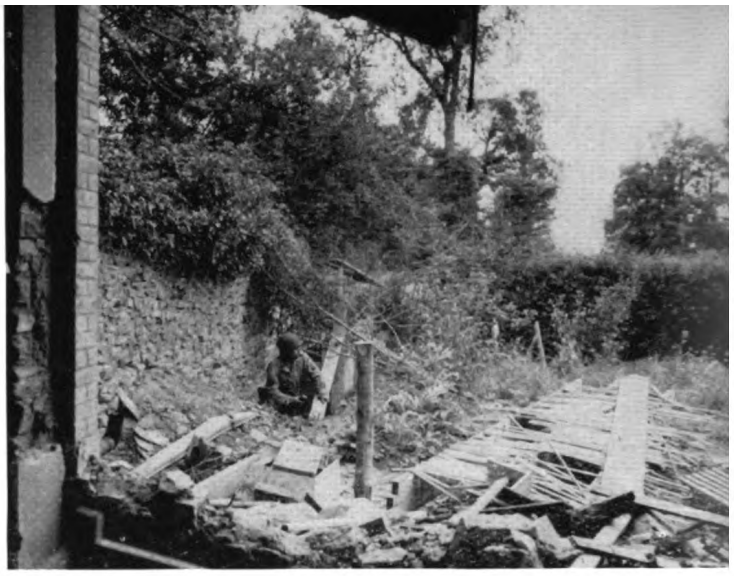
"Here no evil"—German P. W.'s on the road back to St. Lo, France



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"Don't knock"—Soldiers examine door to German blockhouse



"Steel and concrete"—German reinforced C. P.



"Not to kill, but to save"—Litter bearers carry wounded into aid station near St. Lo



Two GI's entering St. Lo

"Try to sneak up," near St. Lo, France

German "Booby Traps"





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his key defense in the area, the Church and the Chateau at St. Gilles. The Church was one of those pretty monuments that are often seen near the roadside in France. Erected in 1718 by the Corps de Denis, it stood sturdily by its quaint and well-kept cemetery, surrounded by several small buildings used by the church officials. The Church itself was built of sandstone and, like most edifices of that area, had walls eighteen inches in thickness. It was surmounted by a bell tower about fifty feet in height.

The beauty and sanctity of this haven did not prevent the enemy from converting it into a veritable fortress. It bristled with firepower and atop the bell tower was a German machine gun nest that commanded the approaches to the area. Close behind the church was a chateau, another thick-walled building with excellent facilities for fortification. To this building the enemy added embellishments of his own devising. A labor battalion of impressed Russians had been forced to build heavy reinforcements and a bomb shelter of concrete with walls three feet thick. Here the enemy was determined to make a last stand.

Colonel Grant Layng of Connecticut, Commanding Officer of the 137th Infantry, was wounded by machine gun fire during this battle, while Lieutenant Colonel John N. Wilson, Commanding Officer of the 219th Field Artillery Battalion and Captain John R. Kerr, artillery liaison officer, were killed.

Brigadier General E. B. Sebree, Assistant Division Commander, was placed in temporary command of the 137th when Colonel Layng was hit and continued in command during the day of 11 July until Colonel Harold R. Emery reported. Major Claude N. Shaver assumed command of the 219th Field Artillery Battalion.

The first enemy prisoners indicated that the Division was facing elements of the 897th and 899th Infantry Regiments, comprising the Kampf Gruppe Kentner.

Despite pounding by the artillery, the fortified strongpoint at St. Gilles could not be eliminated, and throughout this first day of combat the 137th was subjected to heavy machine gun and mortar fire as well as fire from 88 and 150mm artillery pieces.

Casualties in the regiment for this day's operations were 12 killed, 96 wounded and 18 missing in action.

The next day, the weather was cloudy and intermittent showers slowed the attack. Finally with tank destroyers of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached to the 137th, and in conjunction with the 35th Reconnaissance Troop, an assault was made. Armor drove up to the church and fired point-blank into it. At 1045 elements of the 1st Battalion stormed the citadel and captured it. Continuing its attack the battalion reduced all resistance in the vicinity of St. Gilles by 1400, while the 3rd Battalion, after capturing an enemy strong position about 1000 yards south of St. Gilles at 1600, was held up by machine gun fire, mines and booby-traps.

The positions of the enemy were now highly untenable. Further resistance would only force him into the trap that the 3rd Battalion was closing. During the night he retreated.

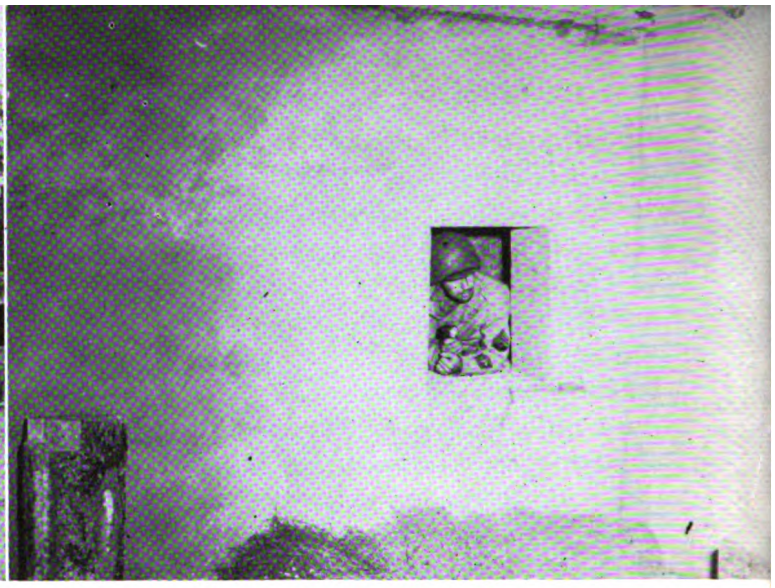
Casualties on 12 July were seven killed, 74 wounded and seven missing for the 137th. Among these was Lieutenant John T. Graham of Company F, the first officer of the 137th to give his life in battle.

Yankee ingenuity began to assert itself early as the Americans became battlewise. One method used very effectively in negotiating the German Hedgerow was to place a tank destroyer behind the hedgerow and fire point-blank into the machine gun positions of the enemy, ordinarily in the corners of the field ahead. As this was being done, the infantry moved across the field and encircled

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"Peak-a-boom!"—Troops examine blockhouse at St. Lo



"Front-door"—Signal Corps cameraman at entrance of tunnel of concrete C. P.



"Achtung!"—Sgt. Eric Conrad, British linguist urges Germans to surrender, 35th's St. Lo sector



"No mistakes allowed"

"A BOFORS 40mm at St. Lo"



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the enemy positions. Then when the tank destroyer lifted its fire, the infantry liquidated the already battered machine gun nest.

Psychological warfare, too, was used in the attack. Leaflets were scattered over the Nazi lines, pointing out the hopelessness of the German position. Use was made of the example of Colonel General Schleiben, Commandant of Cherbourg, who himself had surrendered while ordering his men to fight to the death.

Good treatment was promised during the period of captivity and special safe conduct passes through Division lines were distributed for the use of those who wished to put the war behind them. It was discovered that some of the enemy units were composed in great measure of Polish, Russian and Czechoslovakian soldiers. Loudspeakers were erected for broadcasts to the enemy and many of them deserted to the lines of the Santa Fe.

On 13 July, the 137th attacked at 0800 with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions again leading. The 2nd Battalion received intense shell fire and was unable to advance. The 3rd Battalion advanced about 500 yards before being stopped by heavy machine gun fire. Enemy 88mm fire then proceeded to pin down both battalions. Division artillery, by knocking out at least two 88mm mobile pieces, eased the situation.

Toward the latter part of the day the 2nd Battalion broke through for a 500 yard gain, while a strong enemy counterattack forced the 3rd Battalion to give up what ground they had gained during the day. The 137th casualties this day were the heaviest yet. The dead numbered 21, wounded 87 and missing in action 17. Among those killed were three fine leaders: Captain Orren L. Beisterfelt, T/Sgt. Henry E. Trefry, S/Sgt. Carl F. Hancock.

Following a blistering 30-minute preparation barrage fired by the 161st, 216th and 219th Field Artillery Battalions, the 137th renewed the attack at 0800 the following day with the 3rd Battalion on the right, 2nd Battalion on the left and 1st Battalion in the center. One platoon of tanks of the 737 Tank Battalion was attached to each battalion.

By 1300 the 1st Battalion had advanced about 300 yards, meeting stiff resistance at La Pointe Ferme. After clearing the Germans out of this area they advanced to La Marel where the enemy had gathered in several fortified stone buildings. Here they encountered heavy minefields and 88mm fire. On this fourth day of combat the 137th lost 17 killed, 106 wounded and four missing.

Meanwhile the 320th Infantry had been operating on the left side of the Division zone. The regiment had attacked at 0600 on 11 July with Company C of the 60th Engineers attached. The initial line occupied was an inverted L-shape, and the plan of maneuver included bringing the right flank, which ran north-south into a line with the left flank running east-west. The 1st Battalion, which operated on the right, initially was confronted with the problem of executing a turning movement while attacking a very tough salient. The 2nd Battalion, later replaced by the 3rd Battalion on the left flank, also met very stiff resistance, and any advance in its line created a possibility of losing contact with the battalion on its right. Led by Colonel Bernard A. Byrne, the Regimental Commander, the 320th held all lines until they were able to smash the foe and gain their objective.

Much heroism was required to maintain the regimental position during these trying days. At one time, on 12 July, an especially vicious counter-attack threatened the entire 3rd Battalion position. Although it appeared that some units were withdrawing in the face of blistering enemy fire, Company K, under the command of Captain Kenneth H. Tros-

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sen, made no attempt to pull back, but instead requested more ammunition.

Influenced by this courageous stand, and encouraged by the immediate action of Captains Albert C. Frederikson and Victor H. English, and Lieutenant James R. F. Woods, two of the units reformed and recaptured the disputed ground in a savage attack. The Germans quickly learned that the 320th was a formidable opponent.

On 15 July, the 137th Infantry attacked for the fifth consecutive morning and was met by heavy artillery fire. With the 3rd Battalion established 200 yards north of the main highway into St. Lo, Company K pushed forward to the road at 0910, but was held there by intense machine gun fire. Here the regiment paused to reorganize while the 1st Battalion turned back a strong German counter-attack.

The 137th lost 16 men killed, 100 wounded and one missing in action on this day, but took 15 prisoners and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

15 July found the 320th in its zone smashing the Germans as it gained 300 yards and took 33 prisoners.

"Double check for St. Lo mines"





"First aid"—Giving first aid to a wounded French child

On Sunday 16 July enemy fire lessened. The week's attack and the heavy pounding of artillery was beginning to tell on the Germans. Reports drifted in of their units operating with insufficient replacements, or none at all, of a shortage of food, water and ammunition, due to the pounding of communication lines by American Air Forces.

On the morning of 17 July, both the 320th and 137th attacked, and for the remainder of that day and the next, a battle as furious as it was deadly, was fought on both their fronts. Pressing the attack, the 1st Battalion, 137th commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John H. Stowers, Natchez, Mississippi, broke through and was the first unit to reach a division objective. The enemy threw in everything he had, but nothing was enough to stem the tide of determined Yanks from forging ahead.

In the meantime, the Division zone of operations had been extended and on 13 July, the 3rd Battalion, 134th had replaced the 2nd Battalion of the 115th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Division, taking up positions along a streamline just south of Villiers Fossard.

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The 134th attacked on the morning of 15 July with the mission of destroying the enemy forces in their zone, capturing Hill 122, and seizing and occupying St. Lo. To do this, they had to drive down the left flank between the zone of the 320th and the main road leading to St. Clair sur Elle. The enemy, so far as was known, consisted of elements of the 14th Parachute Regiment, 897th and 898th and 899th Panzer Grenadier Regiments.

The terrain through which the 134th had to pass was quite like that of the 137th and 320th—rolling country with large hedgerows and high bush. In the center was Hill 122, not an ordinary hill, but a long series of gradually elevated plateaus across which were fields, sunken narrow roads and hedgerows, all excellent for defensive positions held by the enemy, standing as the dominating terrain feature before St. Lo.

Attached to the 134th for the final St. Lo drive were the 2nd Battalion of the 320th Infantry Regiment, elements of the 737th Tank Battalion, Company A of the 60th Engineers, Company A of the 110th Medical Battalion, and the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The plan was to attack with the 1st and 2nd Battalions abreast with medium tank company attached to each, and a light tank company was held in reserve. In order to achieve tactical surprise, an artillery preparation was not to be fired.

At the town of Emilie, the surging 134th was halted by the enemy fighting behind stone walls. Each house had been converted into a fortress. Finally, in the early afternoon, the 1st Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment, following a rolling barrage, swept away all remaining opposition and in a hand-to-hand fight took the town. They had lived up to the 134th battle cry, "All hell can't stop us."

At 2100 the 134th had advanced as far as the north slope of Hill 122. Colonel Butler B. Miltonberger, commanding the Regiment, credits the success of his men in taking the reaches of this Hill to the close support given them by the attached tank company, and by the artillery barrage. This barrage was controlled entirely by the artillery front line observers with the rifle companies, and was moved on their call. It is a matter of record that the infantrymen followed the barrage as close as 75 yards.

Storming Hill 122 became the next combat assignment of the newly committed 1st Battalion, 134th commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alford C. Boatsman, Beatrice, Nebraska, supported by the following units: 161st Field Artillery Battalion reinforced by the fire of the 127th and 963rd Medium Battalions and the 92nd 4.2 Chemical Battalion. The supporting plan of fire was unique in that it provided a continuous rolling barrage during the entire operation. Just prior to the 134th's assault on Hill 122, the entire mass of fire was placed on the target at the maximum rate of fire for 15 minutes. A thin curtain was then hung in front of the hill while hasty defensive installations were prepared.

The next day, with the 2nd Battalion of

"Shall also die by the sword"
A fresh German grave



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"At last, quiet"—Exhausted Germans, dazed from artillery bombardment of night before



"Tank destroyers roar"—T.-D.'s used as artillery near St. Lo

the 320th in reserve, a coordinated assault was made toward Hill 122 and St. Lo. While the P-47's sprayed and bombed the Hill, the tank-infantry combinations struck at machine gun nests and other strongpoints of enemy opposition. Each use of the infantry-tank teams required close coordination and amounted to separate small actions in themselves. In many cases the infantry commanders rode on, or walked by the tanks, directing them personally.

Tank destroyers overrode and smashed dugouts and strongpoints after the infantry had passed through. The advance of foot troops under artillery power-drive proved effective in shoving back the enemy.

The Germans had dug in, around and through the hedgerow. As learned from experience and verified by prisoners, machine guns were along the hedges, and, as a rule, observers for the mortars were in one field directly in rear of the machine guns. The mortars were then emplaced in stream beds or low ground in the rear of the observers.

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When our infantry launched an attack, the dug-in machine guns were employed against them. As our artillery fire was brought down on the machine guns the Germans would drop mortar fire on our advancing infantry, hoping both for casualties and to cause our infantry to believe that their own artillery fire was falling short. Because of these tactics the Division Artillery fired on German machine guns, mortar observers and mortars simultaneously.

Just before dawn, 16 July, the 1st Battalion started across the mined fields under enemy fire toward Hill 122 itself. As the battalion started up the slope, the hill spewed lead like an exploding ammunition dump, but the doughboys pushed on.

The Germans counter-attacked the steadily moving line and were thrown back. Despite the mounting losses, the 1st Battalion edged uphill against the apparently impregnable enemy defense line. Finally Hill 122 fell.

The advance was slowed down by insistent infiltration of small parties of frantic enemy. It took a series of hand-to-hand engagements to subdue these parties. This was a typical Nazi maneuver. The men in these suicide squads meant nothing to their leaders; it was time that counted.

But this costly delay, for which the Germans paid a high price, allowed them to complete their lines and be in position to launch a counter-attack also on 16 July. As the 3rd Battalion started moving down the right flank of the 134th, opposition was fierce, for the enemy was well aware that once his flank was penetrated he would not again be in a position to drive the Yanks from the dominating hill.

LST brings 35th vehicles on beach at Coilesville, France



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"Ready, willing and able"—St. Lo sector



"Yanks inspect St. Lo"

As the day passed, the Americans could not be dislodged, the German attacks slowed down, but the enemy's artillery fire continued in intensity. While the 1st Battalion held tenaciously to Hill 122, the 2nd Battalion, in a sunset push, attacked at 2000 and gained about 600 yards.

The cost in men and equipment had not been low. The 134th had lost 102 killed in action, 589 wounded and 101 missing. The expenditures of sweat and blood can never be measured. But Hill 122 had been taken and the road into St. Lo was open.

Already some agents of the Division Counter Intelligence Corps team under the command of 1st Lieutenant Warren Colgan had wormed into the city and assured a group of citizens herded together in the L'Ecole Normal, that shortly the American Army would arrive to liberate them. Penetrating almost to the center of the city to assure other groups, they made their escape only a few minutes ahead of a Nazi patrol.

The city, which for days had been subjected to the bombardment of American air forces, and more recently to the precision

"Cleaning St. Lo of snipers"



"House cleaning"—in ruins of St. Lo



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of American artillery, was a mere shambles. Hundreds of citizens, unable to escape, had been caught between the two armies and lay buried beneath the mounds of rubble. The enemy still held the city, but used it mainly as a defense point while their troops shifted to high ground to the south.

About 1950 on 18 July Major Dale N. Goodwin, S-2, and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon of the 134th entered St. Lo from the northeast. The Platoon, under the command of 1st Lieutenant John F. Tracy of Brooklyn, New York, consisted of T/5 Charles N. Piercy, Elgin, Tennessee; Corporal N. Stefansky, Cleveland, Ohio; Pfc. Eutimio Espinoza, Blanca, Colorado; Pfc. Arthur E. Peck, St. Louis, Missouri; Pfc. Robert E. Lee, Newberg, Oregon; Pfc. Elgin A. Wilkinson, Venie, California; and Pvt. Edgar C. Hale, Little Rock, Arkansas. Under constant mortar fire they advanced to the center of the city, reconnoitered and returned by the northeast route.

On the same day elements of the 29th Infantry Division, attacking from the east while the Santa Fe was attacking from the north, closed in upon St. Lo. The Stars and Stripes now floated over the objective of one of the most bitter battles on French soil. On the night of the 19th, the 134th relieved the elements of the 29th Infantry Division and completed the occupation of St. Lo.

Three weeks before, the 35th had been made up of green troops still in an English training camp. Now, scarred but battlewise, they were the veterans of their first bitter campaign of World War II. Unheraled, they had entered a situation which ranked with the beachhead landings and had emerged the victors.

For this battle the first Distinguished Unit Citation in the Division was bestowed upon the 1st Battalion, 134th Regiment. The citation says simply . . . "The gallantry, heroism and will to win of the 1st Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment contributed immeasurably to a major victory for the United States."



"St. Lo mine sappers"



"You sleep, I'll watch"

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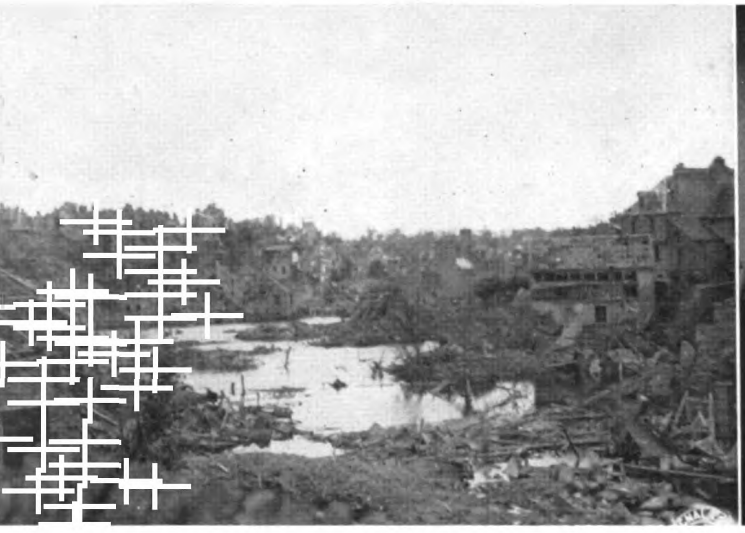
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"Let me take a look"



"St. Lo wreckage"



"The Lake of St. Lo"



"Welcome"—Men of the 35th enjoy cider, near St. Lo

"Look down, look down"—shell torn St. Lo

B.A.R. fires on German position, near St. Lo





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The Division could well be proud of the following commendation:

HEADQUARTERS XIX CORPS
OFFICE OF THE CORPS COMMANDER

France
A.P.O. 270,
c/o Postmaster
U. S. Army
19 July 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division

A.P.O. 35, c/o Postmaster, United States Army.

1. The capture of St. Lo climaxes an operation of major importance to the American cause, and brings to a successful conclusion the initial combat action of the 35th Infantry Division.

2. It was marked by repeated instances of personal and group heroism of the highest order and has earned for your division a place among the great organizations of American military history.

3. Please convey to the veteran officers and men of your division my pride in their achievements, and my sincere congratulations on a job well done.

/s/ Charles H. Corlett
/t/ CHARLES H. CORLETT
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

This letter General Baade indorsed to the units of the division, adding his own "sincere personal appreciation, satisfaction and congratulations" to each member of the command for his fine performance in this brilliant victory.

When a copy of this letter reached the United States, President (then Senator) Harry S. Truman, a Captain in the 129th Field Artillery Battalion of the 35th Division during World War I, asked for and received permission to have it inserted in the Congressional Record.

General Baade also sent a message to his men on the same day through the medium of the "Santa Fe Express," the Division newspaper, as it published its first overseas edition on French soil. In the paper the General said:

"Men of Santa Fe:

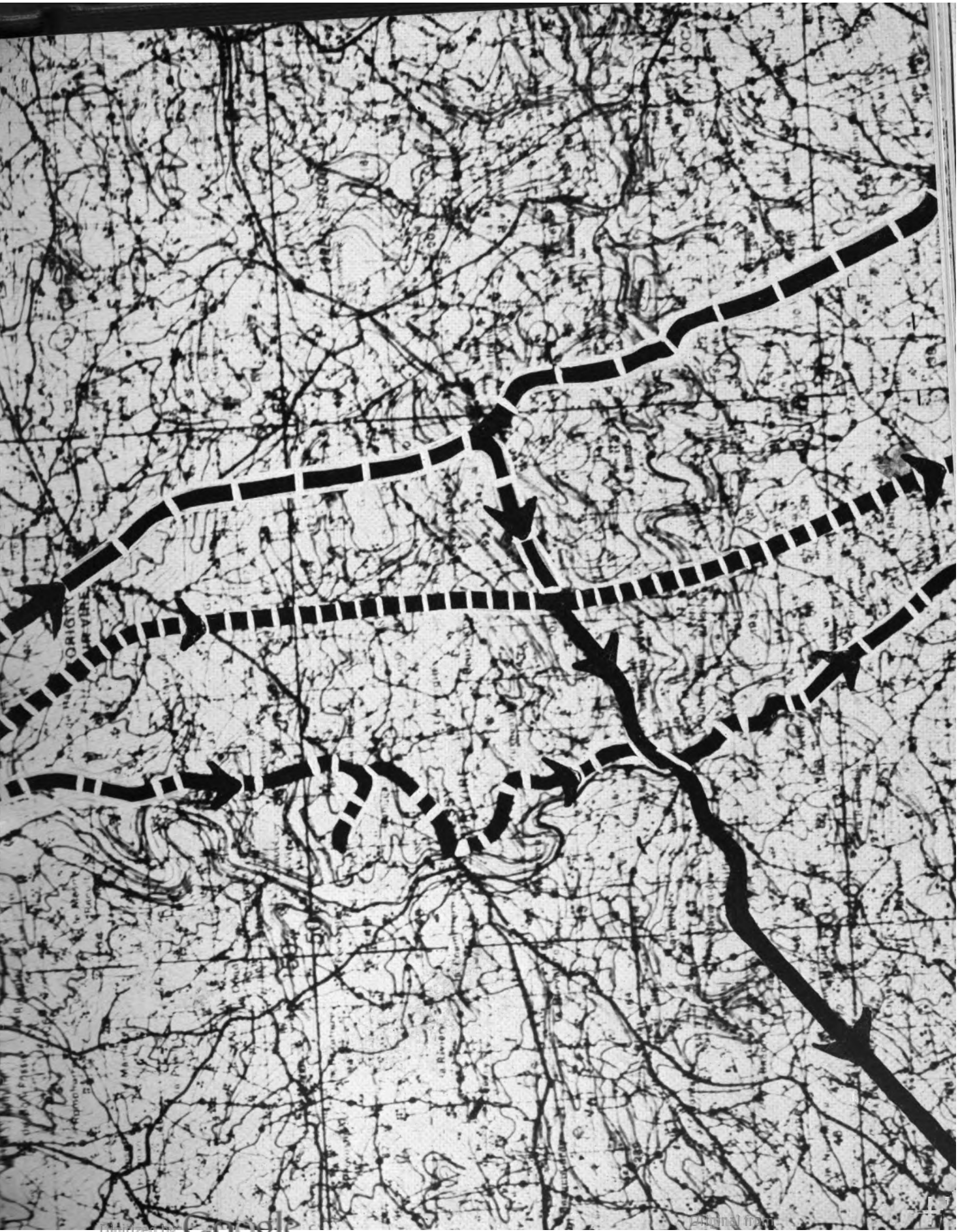
"You are now combat veterans. You have proven yourselves capable of taking your place in the line with the fine soldiers of our own Army and the Allied Nations. As we continue on the positive path to victory, I congratulate you for the glorious start you have made."

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Map of St. Lo Sector, France



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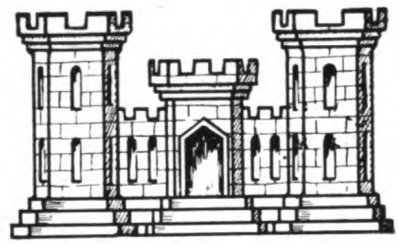


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NORTHERN FRANCE
CAMPAIGN
25 JULY 44 — SEPT 44



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CHAPTER IV

Beyond St. Lo to Vire!

FROM the end of the St. Lo battle until 27 July, the Division was occupied in cleaning out remaining small groups of resistance and solidifying the area around St. Lo into secure territory. Refugees were beginning to struggle back into the ruined city, and, under the supervision of the Civil Affairs Section, commanded by Major Edward I. Condren, and the French Forces of the Interior, the former residents were slowly rehabilitated.

In order to break through the area of hedgerow defenses and gain a decisive victory in the west, the 1st U. S. Army planned operation "Cobra." This operation called for a complete eruption of the German front lines immediately west of St. Lo with the primary mission of allowing ground troops to break through and drive southward into the area more suited for the use of armor.

On 25 July, more than 3,000 American aircraft, by saturation bombing of enemy positions, opened a five mile gap in the German lines. On the 26th, American armor streamed through to the south. The next day the 35th (relieved from assignment to the XIX Corps and now assigned to the V Corps), moved south from St. Lo to the attack.

Preceded by a ten-minute preparatory fire of all the division artillery and twelve field artillery battalions from Corps, the 320th and 134th Infantries attacked at 1500, 27 July. The 3rd Battalion of the 134th pushed southwest of St. Lo along the main highway and then turned southeast. The 2nd Battalion followed the advance of the 3rd, and the 1st Battalion attacking at 1800, and moved east.

On the following day, the 320th met stub-

"Happy supermen"—Guarding some not unhappy prisoners



"It's a disgrace," says this captured German officer



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Captured Nazi officer shaves

Distinguished Service Cross
Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baade, C. G., and Col. Butler M. Miltonberger congratulate Pfc. Buster E. Brown



born resistance until about 1700 and then moved steadily to their initial objective. At 2130 they surrounded a large group of the enemy and took a number of prisoners after inflicting many casualties. The following gives some idea of the battlewise hardness with which the men were rapidly becoming calloused.

Company K of the 3rd Battalion of the 320th, under the command of 1st Lieutenant Curtis H. Alloway, Independence, Mo., with about 120 men, were on the left. They had captured a German parachutist who revealed that the remainder of his company of about 150 men were defiladed in a stream bed only 75 yards away. After verifying the report, Company K proceeded cautiously. Presently, with shouts of "Sieg Heil!" and "Heil Hitler" the parachutists stormed down from the ravine, only to be met by intense pointblank fire. A few minutes later another part of the fanatical group attempted to encircle the right of Company K, but were caught by fire from Company I. Further shouts were heard, but no attempt to attack followed. Forty-five Nazis were killed or wounded and thirty were captured.

The 134th also reached its objective about 2100 on 28 July as the 35th advanced 4000 meters during the day. The next day, the 134th and the 320th attacked again and once more the advance was about 4000 meters.

On 31 July the 320th, with elements of the 737th Tank Battalion and the 81st Chemical Battalion attached, drove forward from behind a smoke screen. The battalions were abreast in numerical order from right to left as they advanced in line from St. Amand to La Detourbe. The 1st Battalion, commanded by Major Frank S. Waring of Holyoke, Mass., pressed forward and occupied the city of Torigni sur Vire. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued their advance until they reached La Pane.

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The 134th had also attacked on the 31st at 0815 with battalions abreast, and after reaching their objective west of Torigni, continued southward about 2000 yards against stiffening resistance. During this action Lt. Colonel Alfred Thompson of Omaha, Nebraska, was mortally wounded.

Meanwhile, the 137th had been attached to Task Force "S" under the command of Brigadier General Sebree. Task Force "S" included the 219th Field Artillery Battalion, the 737th Tank Battalion, Company B of the 60th Engineers, Company B of the 110th Medical Battalion, one company from the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, one platoon of the 35th Reconnaissance Troop, and a detachment from the 35th Signal Company.

It had two objectives: (1) to capture the high ground southeast of Brectouville, and (2) to take, with the division, the high ground north of the Vire River southeast of Tessy sur Vire.

On 31 July, Task Force "S" attacked in a column of battalions at 0618. The 3rd Battalion, 137th leading and the 1st following at 300 yards. The 2nd Battalion was held in reserve. The 3rd Battalion, led by Lt. Colonel Albert M. Butler, Hastings, Nebraska, was held up by mortar, machine gun and artillery fire north of Les Fontaines, about 1500 yards south of Conde sur Vire. By noon they had smashed 500 yards to a bridge south of Les Fontaines.

At 1900 the 3rd Battalion encountered heavy machine gun and mortar fire north of Brectouville. Waiting until the 1st Battalion came up, they reorganized for a determined push to the first objective, reaching it by 2300.

On 1 August Task Force "S" again attacked at 0530, with the 3rd Battalion on the right, 1st Battalion on the left and the 2nd Battalion in reserve. Early reports were that the Germans had been digging in all along the front, with no evidence of withdrawal. Nevertheless, the 1st Battalion pushed cross-country with their supporting tanks, attacking down the road approaches. The combined infantry-tank team successfully moved forward toward Brectouville and at 0850 the main body of the battalion was in the town. Infantry patrols probing south from the town reported new half-track and other large vehicle tracks, freshly dug slit trenches and foxholes, indicating that the Germans had just left.

By noon the 1st Battalion was at the stream north and west of Pitaunay, where they were held up by enemy machine gun and mortar fire. At that time the 3rd Bat-

"Terrain maps ready for distribution"



"Main Street, Torigni-Sur-Vire"



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"Coming home"—Refugees return to St. Lo homes



"That way"



"Don't be scared"—T/Sgt. Olin Dows and Pvt. John Regola play with French children

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talion had crossed the same stream and was at a point slightly south of le Mt. Hebert.

With a strong enemy line encountered, extending from south of le Mt. Hebert to Pitaunay and west, Task Force "S" reorganized and launched a coordinated attack at 1800. After an advance of 1000 yards, the 1st Battalion again met heavy machine gun and direct 88mm fire. The battalion was hit hard and for a time B and C Companies were cut off. The battalion was forced to fall back and the 2nd Battalion was ordered to move around to the right of it and march on Tessy in order to cut the Tessy-Torigni road. Reports already had been received that Allied armored forces had entered Tessy during the night.

The fight continued during the night, and a coordinated night attack was made shortly after midnight with the 2nd Battalion jumping off at 0100 and the 3rd Battalion at 0130. By 0800 the next morning the 3rd Battalion was in Domjean.

The 2nd Battalion, now operating on the right of the 3rd, crossed Highway GC 13 leading northwest from Tessy, pushed down the east bank of the Vire River, and reached the double bend in the river south of Le Mesnil by 1000. At 1050 the Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel George T. O'Connell, Emporia, Kansas, reported two of his rifle companies and the heavy weapons company across the river.

With the 2nd and 3rd Battalions across the river, the 1st Battalion remained north of the river to protect the Division's west flank. The attack continued throughout the night, and at 0210 on the morning of 3 August, Company E was on the objective with the entire 3rd Battalion following at 0735.

The weather, which had been clear during the first three days of the attack, became cloudy and overcast, and rain fell during the afternoon, ranging from a light sprinkle north of the Vire River to thundershowers in the south. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions resumed the attack south of the river, moving forward with little opposition until the 2nd Battalion was held up by a dug-in tank destroyer position south of le Fortier at 0940. The battalion knocked out this resistance at 1115 and moved on. At 1225 the advance was again held up by machine gun and mortar fire south of El Gohier and by tanks east of that point. These enemy tanks were driven out by the 737th Tank Battalion at 1320 and shortly after 1400, the 2nd Battalion reached la Tabourie.

The 3rd Battalion in the meantime was receiving heavy mortar and scattered time fire. Increasing resistance held up the advance of the task force during the afternoon. As resistance was built up, contact was made with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 116th Infantry of the 29th Division closing the exposed flank to the right.

Casualties for the Task Force for the first three days of August were 19 killed, 145 wounded and 9 missing.

But fourteen prisoners had been captured. They were predominantly Nazis in comparison to the foreign soldiers operating north of St. Lo. Most of them were members of the Hitler Youth Movement and retained their faith in their Fuehrer, believing that Germany would eventually win the war. They had been promised by their propagandists that soon "total war" would be waged against the Allies and that the robot planes would be used on the front lines.

At 0630 on 4 August, Task Force "S" continued the attack with the 2nd Battalion on the right and the 1st Battalion, which had been brought across the Vire River, on the left. The 3rd Battalion, after being passed by the 1st, reverted to force reserve. The weather was again clear although the roads were slightly muddy.

Light scattered resistance was encountered

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at 0830, and enemy minefields were reported south and west of Beaumesnil. The 2nd Battalion pushed across the stream south of Beaumesnil, and were reported on the new objective at 1000. The 1st Battalion, after overcoming mortar and machine gun fire, reached the objective at 1100.

Thereupon Task Force "S" ceased to operate as such, and all units comprising it reverted to their former status.

The 320th and 134th, fighting brilliantly on the left of Task Force "S," continued their advance along with it so that all elements of the division reached their objective during the day. A review of the operations revealed that in four days the division had advanced almost the entire distance from St. Lo to Vire.

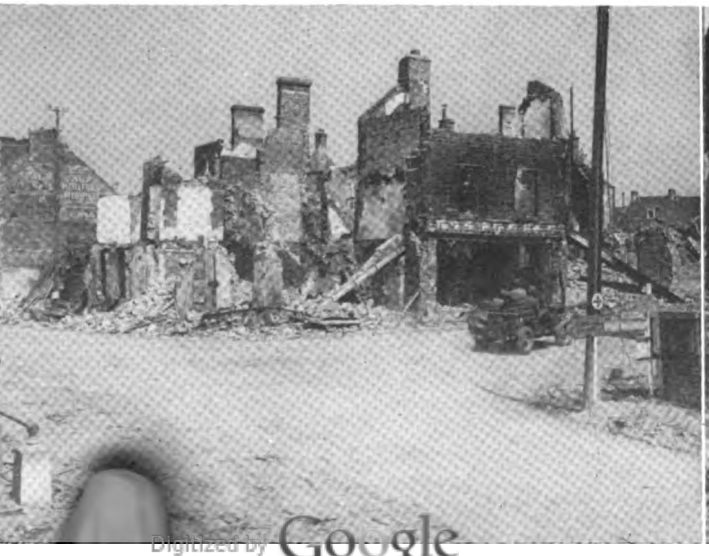
The deadly fire of the artillery did much to force the enemy to withdraw. On 1 August, for instance, the 134th was ordered to attack with the mission of seizing the Vire River. All through the night the 161st Field Artillery Battalion fired harassing and interdiction missions on the enemy's rear positions. The method of fire was one battery volley at each critical point of the German communications network, approximately every thirty minutes. The next morning, 2 August, the infantry was able to move very rapidly against light enemy resistance because of the effective artillery fire. The number of enemy dead found lying about and numerous blood pools in the area told the story of other casualties which had been evacuated.

During this time the 2nd Division continued to operate on the left of the 35th with the 29th Division on the right.

The 60th Engineer Battalion, under the command of Major Edwin C. Pumroy, had maintained a bridge across the Vire River in the face of heavy enemy shelling, which greatly assisted Task Force "S" in its rapid advance. In five days the Division had mowed down the opposition and had cleared the way for the American advance over what had been feared would be a difficult obstacle.

The work of the 35th was recognized by the following letter and indorsement:

"Torigni-Sur-Vire intersection"



"Silence in St. Lo?"—The Germans have fled



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HEADQUARTERS V CORPS
APO 305, U. S. ARMY
Office of the Commanding General

201.22 5 August 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division.

1. Upon the relief of the 35th Infantry Division from attachment to the V Corps, I desire to express to you, and through you to the officers and men of your division, my thanks and appreciation for their excellent performance while under my command.

2. The 35th Infantry Division was attached to the V Corps two days after the beginning of operation "COBRA." They were ordered to make an immediate advance without all of their organic motor equipment, which could not be made available due to traffic priorities. During the eight days which your division fought under this corps, from 28 July to 4 August 1944, it advanced approximately 27 kilometers, took the town of Torigni Sur Vire on the afternoon of 31 July 1944, and later effected a crossing of the Vire River. Despite the fact that it fought continuously against heavy delaying action and over difficult terrain, the 35th Infantry Division reached all of its immediate objectives and its final objective.

3. The foregoing is an achievement of which you and every member of your division can be justly proud. My personal thanks and best wishes for continued success go with each and every one of you.

/s/ L. T. Gerow
/t/ L. T. GEROW
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

To which letter General Baade indorsed the following message to his troops:

201.22 1st Ind. PWB/mla

Hq 35th INF DIV, APO 35, U S ARMY, 15 Aug 44

TO: All officers and enlisted men, 35th Infantry Division.

1. Again a Corps Commander has seen fit to commend the Division for an achievement of great magnitude. It is just praise and I am exceedingly proud to transmit this commendation to you who have contributed your full measure of hard work and devotion to duty in making the Division so successful.

2. Please have every officer and enlisted man of your command fully informed of the contents of this letter to which I add my own gratitude and congratulations for a job well done.

/s/ Paul W. Baade
/t/ PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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CHAPTER V

Mortain-Santa Fe to the Rescue

THE story of Mortain is a tribute to the courage and fighting qualities of the American Soldier.

By 5 August, the Vire Campaign was over, and the 35th prepared to go onward in extension of the Allied plans. With the Cotentin Peninsula firmly in his grasp, the Supreme Commander intended to take the Croton Peninsula to the south and reduce it, before swinging a wide arm about the German armies in the west. The Third Army, under the command of Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., was preparing to make this wide sweep. In addition to his famed armored columns, General Patton required strong, aggressive infantry to mop up and consolidate the positions the tanks overran. Accordingly, the 35th was transferred back to the Third Army, and assigned to the XX Corps, which also contained the veteran 5th United States Division and the 2nd French Armored Division.

The division began boarding trucks on 5 August to move to an assembly area. Ultimately it was expected to arrive in the vicinity of Rennes which was about midway on the base of the Croton Peninsula.

Proceeding to Pontfaroy, the motor convoy turned southwest, swung around Villedieu, continued southwest to Ponts, within sight of Avranches on the Mont St. Michel Bay. Turning east at Ponts to Brecey, the convoy reached the town of St. Hilaire du Harcouet on the night of 5-6 August.

The breakthrough of the American forces at St. Lo had carried Armor penetration deep into France. The 30th Infantry Division driving down from the north, had captured Mortain, and the high ground southeast of the city. Avranches, the focal point

"Easy now"—Mortain casualties treated at battalion aid station



"More hedgerows of death"—Mortain



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"A nasty business"

of communications between the Allied source of supplies at Cherbourg and the beachheads, was seated at the juncture of the bases of the Cotentin and the Brittany peninsulas. The German Commander in the West, General Von Rundstedt, realized that unless he could attack, divide, and smash the Allied forces with one complete and decisive blow, the battle of Normandy would be lost. Mustering all available resources he counter-attacked on the morning of 7 August with strong forces of tank and infantry, the brunt of the blow striking along the Mortain-Avranches axis in the Mortain area. Sweeping aside all opposition the Germans recaptured Mortain, driving the defenders back, isolating the 2nd Battalion, 120th Infantry, 30th Infantry Division, on a hill just east of the city.

In attempting to enlarge this penetration, the enemy next turned his attention to the west and to the recapture of St. Hilaire du Harcouet. Anticipating the enemy threat, the 35th was ordered to assemble in the vicinity of St. Hilaire. For operational control in meeting the impending threat, the division was attached to VII Corps, 1st U. S. Army, for commitment in the Mortain area. Preparatory to the enemy attack on St. Hilaire on the night of 5-6 August, the town and the roads leading into it were subjected to a severe night bombing by a large fleet of German planes. During this raid, convoys of the 134th and 137th In-



"Two down"—Knocked out tanks on road to Mortain



"Mortain skeletons and their shadows"

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"Jerry trouble"



"How many? Where?"—Questioning captured Boche

fantry Regiments, assembling in their assigned areas, were bombed.

Due to the fluid situation and the enemy's ability to press the attack, Major General Baade ordered Combat Teams 134 and 137 to be prepared to move to the east without delay.

The first problem confronting the Santa Fe was to establish a definite line. This was decided on as the Mortain-Barenton-St. Cyr du Bailleu Highway. Since Combat Teams 134 and 137 were on a thirty minute alert notice, they were able to move quickly. At 2030 on 7 August they moved eastward to secure the highway. This was accomplished in part the first day. But it developed that not only were the Germans strongly entrenched on the high ground north and east of Barenton, firmly dug-in within Mortain and the Mortain Forest, but they were also attempting to drive south and west with a force of approximately 700 men accompanied by tanks through the Mortain Forest in order to cut the St. Hilaire-Louvigne du Desert Highway.

The line having been established except on the Santa Fe's left flank, the next thing to do was to split the enemy into pockets and reduce them. This would have the double effect of driving the enemy from the territory and relieving the besieged battalion of the 30th Division.

The 137th Infantry drove the enemy from Barenton in some sharp fighting and moved into the area between there and le Teilleul.

"Plasma and bare feet"—Bn. aid station—Mortain



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"Be careful"

The regiment's 1st and 2nd Battalions then established posts at St. Georges de Rouelle and St. Mar-de Egrende respectively, with a motorized patrol covering the roads from le Teilleul to St. Cyr thence to the regimental boundary between Mortain and Barenton. These patrols were continued throughout the following day. Then the 3rd Battalion was attached to the 134th Infantry.

On 11 August, elements of the 4th Infantry Division took over part of the 137th's zone and the 2nd Battalion reverted to Division reserve. The 1st Battalion advanced northeast from Barenton to Bousentier, then westward toward the Mortain Forest in an encircling movement. This advance was continued on the 12th, and early in the morning the ridge of the high ground north of le Gil Bouillion was gained.

Pushed from the north slope of the high ground and faced with possible encirclement, the enemy made a general withdrawal from that sector. Long columns of enemy vehicles were reported leaving Ger and St. Barthelemy. American P-47's pounced upon the fleeing Germans and bombed and strafed them continuously during the afternoon.

Enemy artillery was used to cover this withdrawal. The 137th was due to be relieved by elements of the 2nd Armored Division at 2200 in the vicinity of Rancoudray. However, the 1st Battalion of the 137th and the 3rd Battalion of the 134th, which had been attacked, were still engaged in heavy fighting at that hour, and relief was not effected until the morning of 13 August.

Meanwhile the 320th was operating in the immediate area of Mortain. The Combat Team formation ceased at 1800 on 9 August and they continued to operate as a regiment, with attached elements, attacking to the east and pushing back the enemy.

Information was then received that told of the perilous condition of the "Lost Battalion" of the 30th Division. Regardless of the Battalion Commander's courageous retort that the Germans could "Go to Hell with their demand for surrender," the situation was desperate. They had no medical supplies to care for the wounded; their food stocks were depleted; their water was low; their ammunition was fast becoming exhausted. Unless immediate relief reached them, their brave resistance would have to stop. Efforts to drop supplies to them from the air failed. Division artillery tried firing shells filled with medical supplies to them, but the quantities were too small to fill the need.

The attack to the east by the division continued on 10 August against stiff resistance. The 1st Battalion, 320th Infantry with the 737th Tank Battalion attached, drew the assignment to capture Hill 317 and to rescue the "Lost Battalion." This attack began at 1500. The tanks were in column and one company of infantry rode on them. Artillery fired a ten-minute preparation and exactly at the time of the attack, planes appeared and

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bombed the enemy to screen the tank movement. Smoke fired by the artillery marked the targets. In one hour the tanks had advanced a mile under heavy artillery and anti-tank fire. Before the day was over they had reached the foot of the hill. This drive, coupled with the fierce and determined advance of the 134th, cut in two the pocket of resistance west of the highway.

The attack continued throughout 11 August as the 1st Battalion 320th edged up Hill 317. Riding on tanks of the 737th Tank Battalion, the doughboys pushed their way through a stubbornly resisting enemy. Within 500 yards of the "Lost Battalion," the last of the tanks, not crippled by the heavy German fire, halted to cover the advance of the dismounted doughs. The battalion went the rest of the way on foot driving over enemy positions in hand to hand fighting to rescue the courageous battalion of the 30th. Lieutenant Homer W. Kurtz, Troy, Illinois, and four men from the Intelligence Section of the 3rd Battalion were the first to reach the "Lost Battalion."

The relief was a dramatic one, for in their weakened condition it was doubtful if the survivors could have held out much longer. Anticipating this, the 35th Quartermaster Company was waiting to dash up the hill with supplies. A truck filled with supplies and water convoyed by three tanks (two in front and one behind) was the first to run the enemy gauntlet. Almost every driver in the Quartermaster Company had volunteered to make the dash. Corporal Verlin D. Young of Lexington, Nebraska, and T/5 Hans Gehlsen of Gross, Nebraska, were selected.

Driving at top speed over the rough terrain of fields in order to avoid enemy road blocks, dodging through the screen of heavy artillery fire that threatened them all the way, the convoy reached the fast-failing troops with the supplies. Then, instead of remaining in the comparative safety of the battalion area, the convoy dashed back to the 35th Division lines carrying 20 men who were seriously wounded.

Even more significant than the rescue of the battalion was the fact that the German attempt to break the lifeline was smashed. Hitler's last chance to balk the invasion was wrecked and the way was open for the complete rout of the German armies in France.

The 1st Battalion, 320th Infantry and the 737th Tank Battalion were honored with Distinguished Unit Citations for this daring venture. Once again the Santa Fe had beaten back the best that the veteran German Army could muster.

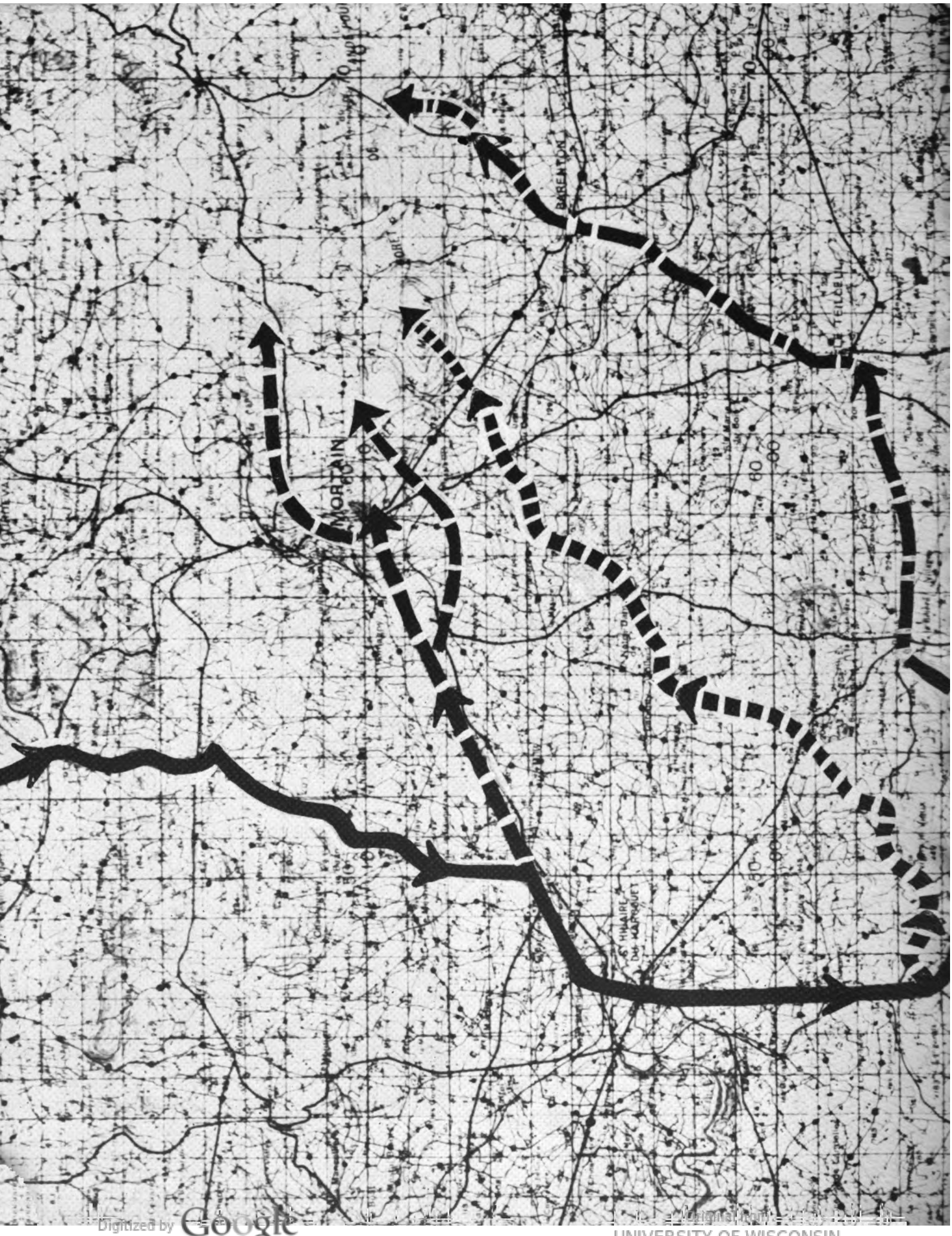
The division was prouder than ever after V-E day when members of the German General Staff stated that the WAR WAS LOST when their counter-attack at Mortain-Avranches failed.

"Tank destroyer's calling cards"—German half-track and light tank after skirmish with a U.S.T.D.

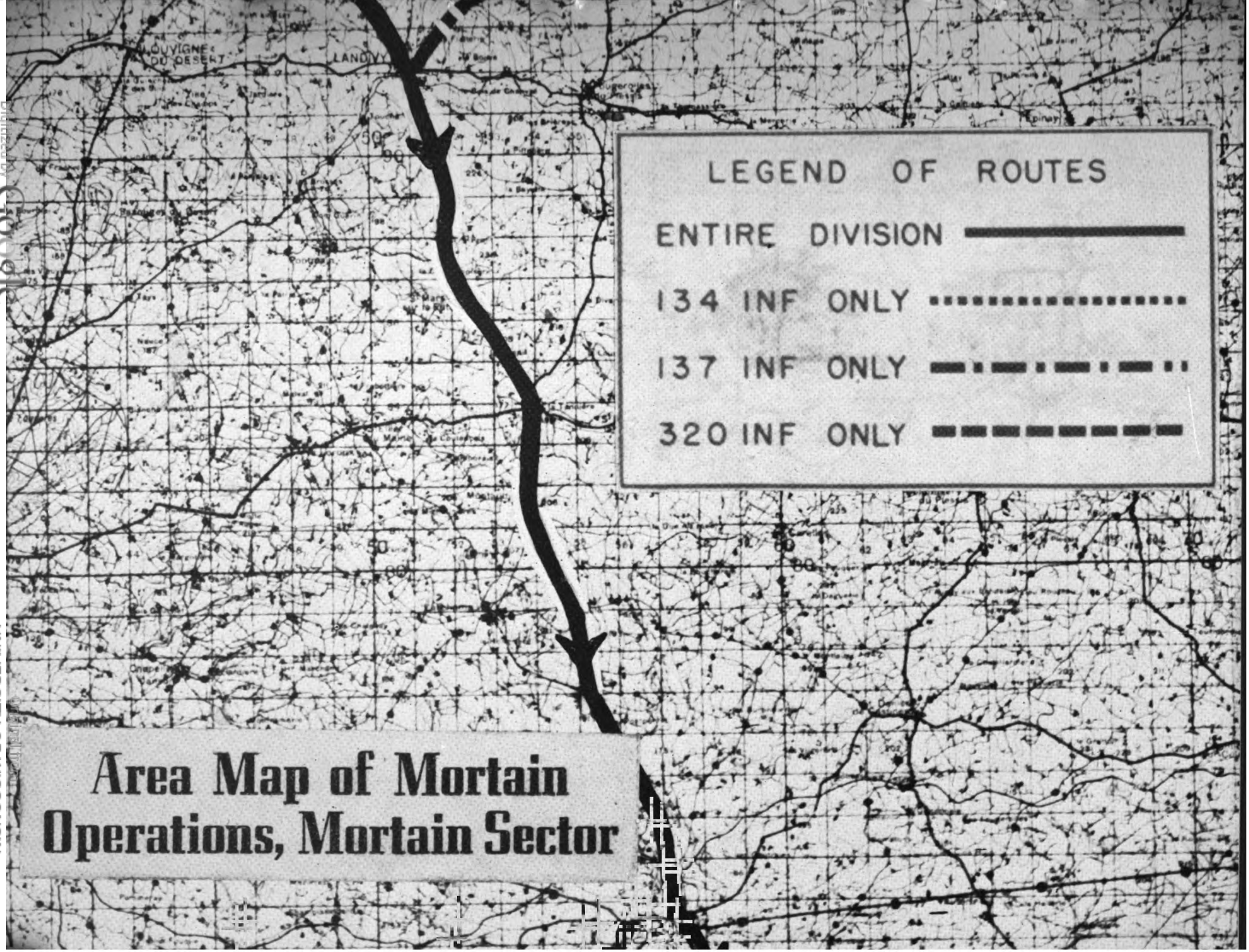


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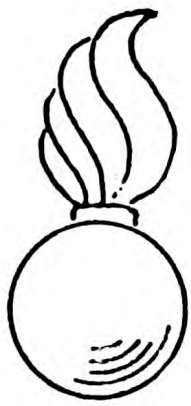


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Area Map of Mortain Operations, Mortain Sector

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Chapter VI

Orleans-Modern Joan of Arc

THE Mortain-Avranches corridor, secured, the race of the Third United States Army through France was on. On 14 August, the 35th was assigned to the XII Corps of this Army and moved to a new assembly area east of Le Mans.

The first objective in this area was local security as preparations were made for the big drive. Combat teams were formed and each were charged with the responsibility of their own areas. In addition, Combat Team 320, with the 35th Reconnaissance Troop attached, was given the mission of protecting the south flank of the Third Army from La Fleche to La Chartre.

Sixty-five miles south of Paris on the north bank of the Loire River lies one of the oldest and most magnificent of French cities, Orleans. Here was the center of freedom loving Frenchmen. This was the home of Joan of Arc.

The Germans used Orleans as the seat for the occupational forces in this section of France. Here they had built a great airfield and stored vast supplies.

Le Mans to Orleans is approximately eighty miles. The breakthrough to the south was completed. Confusion reigned in the German ranks. Now, with the Loire River as right flank protection, General Patton was

"Left behind"—Heavy bomber left behind by the Germans, near Chateaudun



"Two-man traffic team"—Man and a Bazooka



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Maj. Gen. Baade, Brig. Gen. Sebree, Col. Sears, and Maj. Smith, A.D.C., being greeted at Hotel de Ville, Orleans, France, by Monsieur Le Commissaire, Regional de la Republique, Orleans, M. Andre Mars and Staff, on the occasion of the liberation of Orleans by 35th Division



"We are ready"—French patriots near Chateaudun





Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baade at Orleans, France

ready to change direction and strike in blitzkrieg fashion to the east. With only a road map to guide them, the Santa Fe was ordered to capture Orleans.

Morale was high as the division began to roll. Task Force "S," commanded by Brigadier General Sebree and consisting of Combat Team 137, Company D, 737th Tank Battalion, Company B and Reconnaissance Company of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 127th Field Artillery Battalion was selected by General Baade to lead. Later Combat Command A of the 4th Armored Division was attached to the 35th and spearheaded this attack.

General Sebree began the movement in the direction of Orleans at 1100 on 15 August. Tanks of the 4th and doughboys of the 35th

"Plowshares to guns"—40mm set up near Chateaudun awaits the Luftwaffe

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formed a great team and swept aside all opposition. Literally, they raced down the fine French highway. Thirty hours later they stood before Orleans itself as a new page was written in the blitzkrieg book.

Much evidence appeared along the road which showed the loss of equipment suffered by the enemy. Burned and overturned German tanks, guns, trucks, trailers and other items of warfare were strewn along the countryside. In several places complete motor pools had been destroyed as the allied airmen raked the countryside ahead of the dashing ground forces.

As the Task Force closed in upon Orleans, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 137th were on the north while the 1st was pushing south to the Loire. Some resistance was encountered in the woods between Coulmiers and Ormes and casualties were suffered at this point.

As the advance continued through Ormes, a suburb of Orleans, a large German warehouse was captured which contained a complete stock of new kitchen equipment as well as a large supply of motor fuel. A machine shop was also found stocked with airplane motors and other ordnance.

Pushing into Orleans, the 137th's 2nd Battalion reached the railroad crossing on the Ormes highway at 1300 on 16 August. Two hours later the 3rd Battalion was in the northwest part of the city and at 1900 the City Hall was captured.

In the meantime on 15-16 August, the other units of the 35th were also having a field day. Combat Teams 134 and 320 were dashing down the Orleans highway. The 134th advanced to the vicinity of Binas Verdas where, in addition to being in reserve, they patrolled and cleaned out enemy stragglers in the rear areas and guarded the Santa Fe's line of communications.

As Combat Team 320 was ready to proceed down the Le Mans-Orleans road on the



"So this is the one"



"Goering's pride and joy"—Remnants of Chateaudun airfield

"S. S. Supermen"



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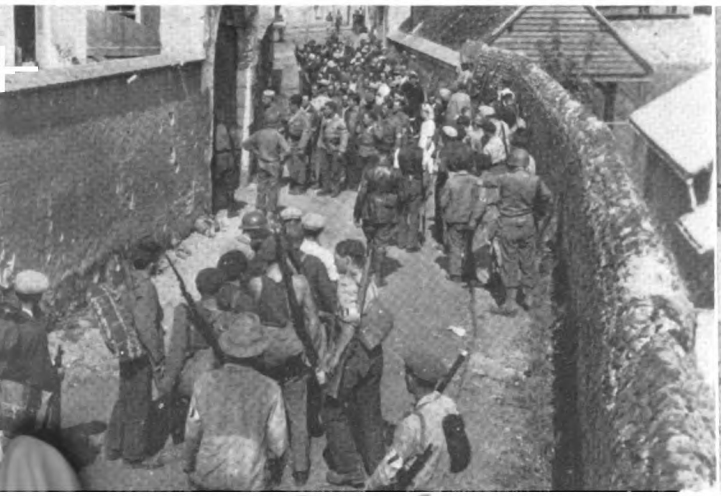


"Breakfast at Orleans"

evening of 15 July its mission was suddenly changed. Chateaudun, 40 miles to the northwest of Orleans, was the objective. Throughout the night the unit rolled. The next morning as they advanced from Veray, heavy small arms, mortar, artillery and rocket fire fell among them. But the dauntless 320th pressed the attack and by noon, 17 August, Chateaudun fell. In addition, the 320th captured the by-passed town of Cloyes. The front line of the Santa Fe was forty miles long!

In Orleans, despite machine gun and heavy artillery fire from German positions across the Loire River and a constant sniper menace, there were very few casualties in the Task Force. During the night, occupation of the city was completed and by morning all hostile resistance had withdrawn across the river. The Germans had left dynamite,

"At last we fight back"



"Two thousand pounds"



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"Clean up"—Yank soldiers near Chateaudun

bombs and other explosives in the post office, the telephone building and other places. The bridge across the Loire was destroyed along with the water mains, cutting off the city's water supply. But the 60th Engineers saved the situation by supplying from 60,000 to 80,000 gallons of water per day.

The citizenry went wild with joy at the quick and expeditious manner in which the Germans had been ousted. Apparently the decision to withdraw had been a hasty one. They had pulled out of the Feldcommandatur 589 so quickly that the staff left soup and stew uneaten on the dinner table and warm soapy water in the bathtub. This headquarters was later occupied by General Sebree, and Feldcommandatur was changed to Santa Fe.

It appeared, with all their reputation for thoroughness, that the jittery Nazis had neglected to notify all of their army agencies of the evacuation. A German airman, unaware that the city was in American hands, attempted to land at the airport north of the city and was destroyed when he tried to make a last-minute getaway.

Many valuable maps and documents were found intact and a vast amount of military

"Fighting men all"



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"My bren"—Monsieur

intelligence was culled from these. Much information was also obtained from the Free French and the Maquis who met the Americans as they entered the city.

Though the Germans were still across the river and occasionally sent machine gun and artillery fire into Orleans, the happy citizens considered the city freed and had a great celebration. On 17 August, the American leaders were notified at 0940 that their presence was requested at the festivities which were to take place at 1000. General Sebree, Colonel Ellsworth of Division Artillery, Colonel Sears, Commanding Officer of the 137th Infantry, and 2nd Lieutenant Anders N. Kullander, aide to General Sebree, attended. The delirious crowds paraded through the streets carrying the banners of the allied nations with signs proclaiming the slogans of allied victory. Thousands along the way shouted their enthusiastic greetings to the Americans.

"A Luftwaffe home"—Orleans



"Liberation in Orleans"



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"One of the freedoms"—Listening to loudspeakers and the truth

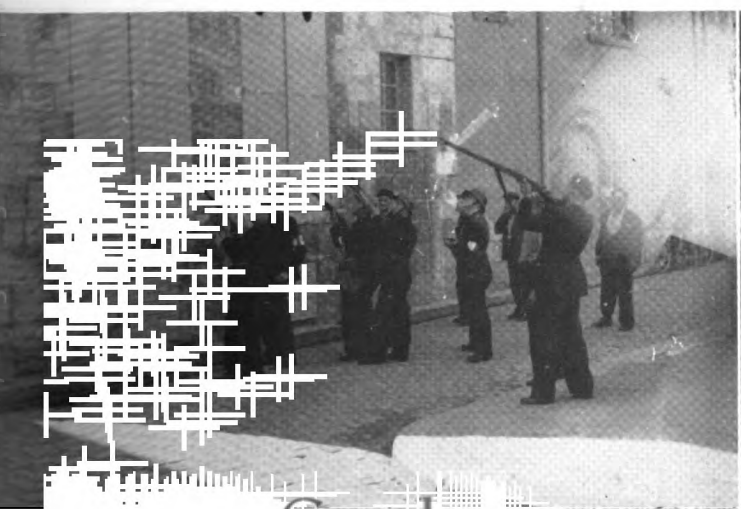
The parade moved down the Rue de la Republique to the Statue of the Maid of Orleans at the city's center. The buildings around the square were demolished and even the base of the statue was damaged. The statue itself, however, was untouched.

The newly appointed Commissioner for the Republic, M. Andre Mars introduced the American officers, each of whom made a few appropriate remarks. The ceremonies ended with the singing of that great song of liberty "La Marseillaise," while the crowd threw flowers at the statue.

At 1400 on the 17th the Germans again began to shell the city from across the river, but General Sebree sent the following message to General Baade through Major Clarence E. Woods, Assistant G-2:

"I am neither confused nor confounded. I can hold the city against two divisions—not against two corps, but two divisions."

"Snipers up-rooted"



"Saturday night"—Chateaudun



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Also received by General Baade was the following letters and indorsement:

HEADQUARTERS
THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APO No. 403, U. S. Army
19 August 1944

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Major General Gilbert R. Cook, Commanding XII Corps, APO 312, U. S. Army.

Please accept for yourself and express to the officers and men of your Corps congratulations and thanks for the magnificent performance of all of you as evinced by your rapid advance and capture of CHATEAUDUN and ORLEANS.

The manner of performance by all concerned is superior and you are hereby highly commended.

/s/ G. S. Patton, Jr.
/t/ G. S. PATTON, JR.
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS XII CORPS

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APO No. 312, U. S. Army
21 August 1944

AG 330.13

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: All Commanders and Units, XII Corps.

1. I regret that General Cook is not present to transmit to you the Army Commander's commendation of the XII Corps.

2. I take great pleasure in forwarding it to you, and I request that it be brought to the notice of all members of the Corps.

/s/ M. S. Eddy
/t/ M. S. EDDY
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

1 Incl: Copy of ltr of commendation.

To which General Baade made this indorsement:

330.13 1st Ind. PWB/mla

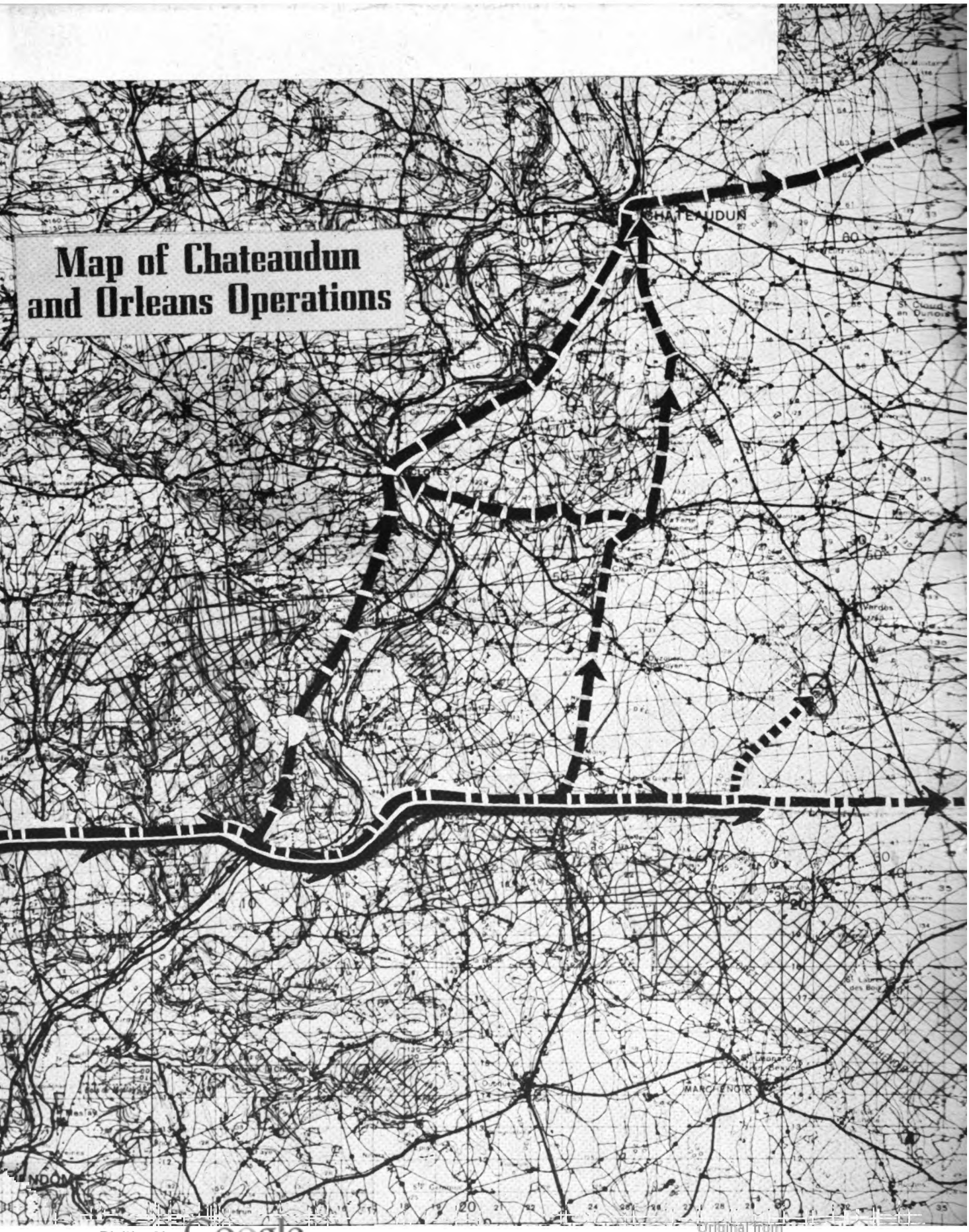
HQ 35th INF. DIV. APO 35, U. S. ARMY, 25 Aug 44

TO: All Officers and Enlisted Men, 35th Infantry Division.

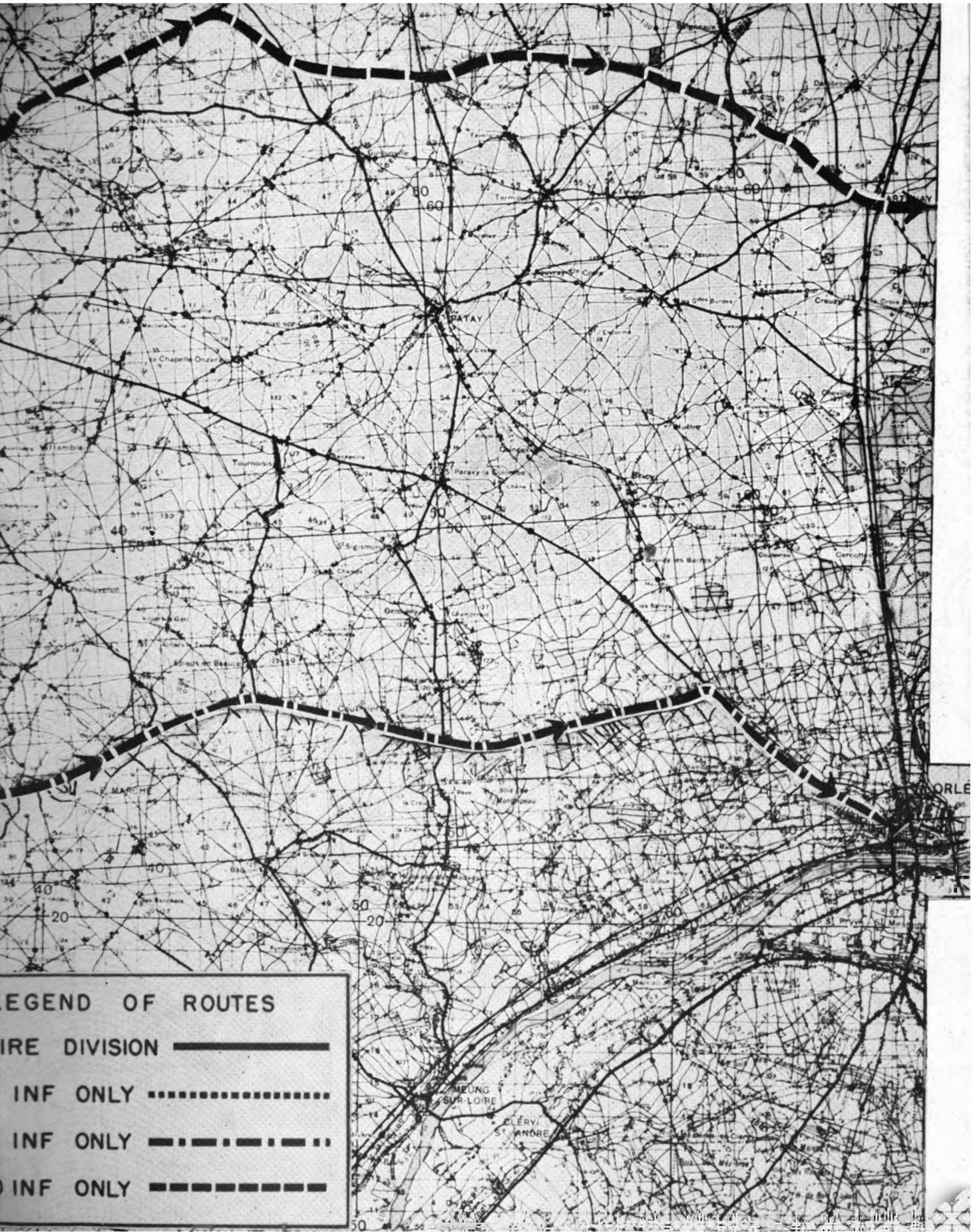
Your glorious achievement in capturing Orleans and Chateaudun will forever be extolled in the history of World War II. Again it is my honor to say to all of you: Well Done!

/s/ Paul W. Baade
/t/ PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

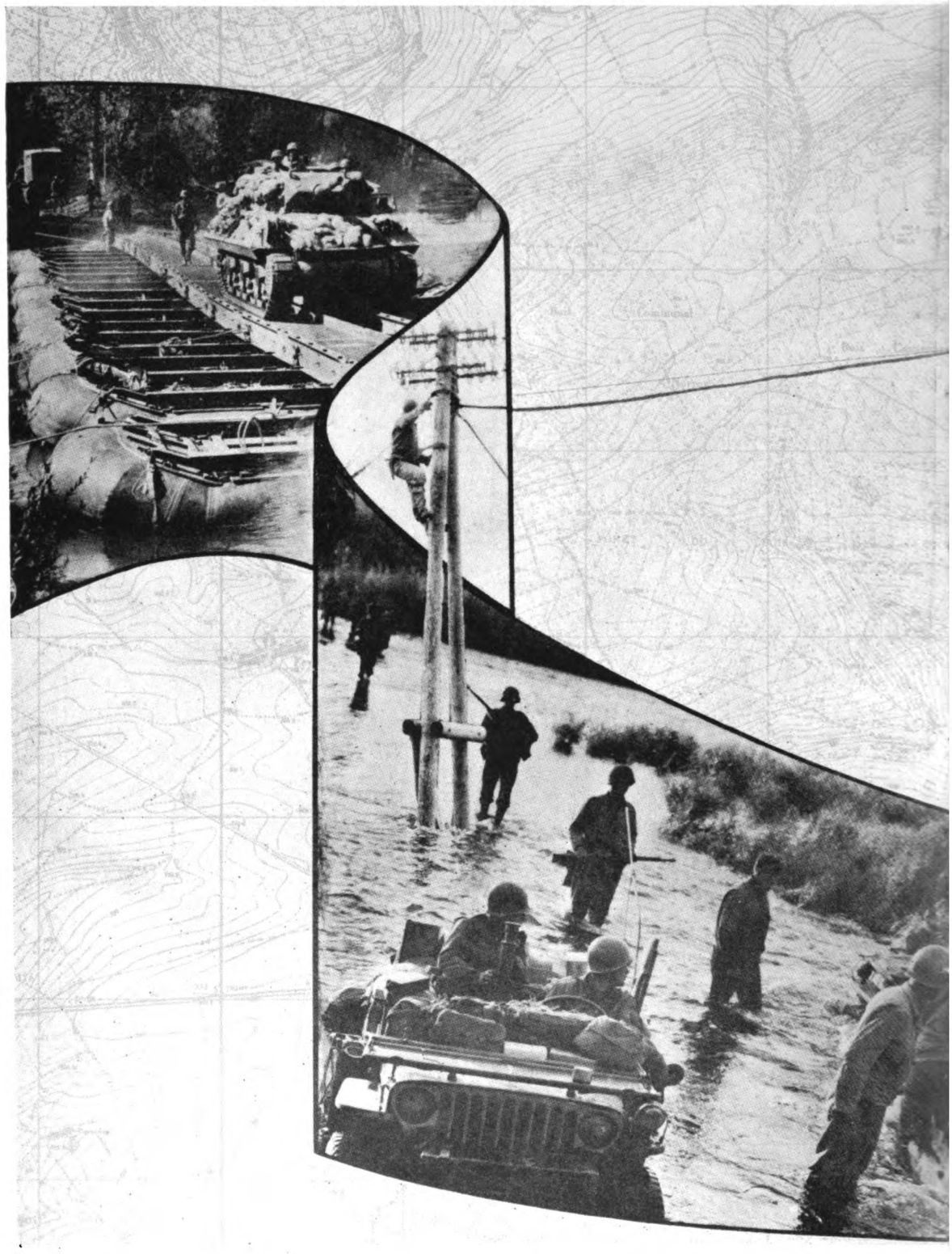
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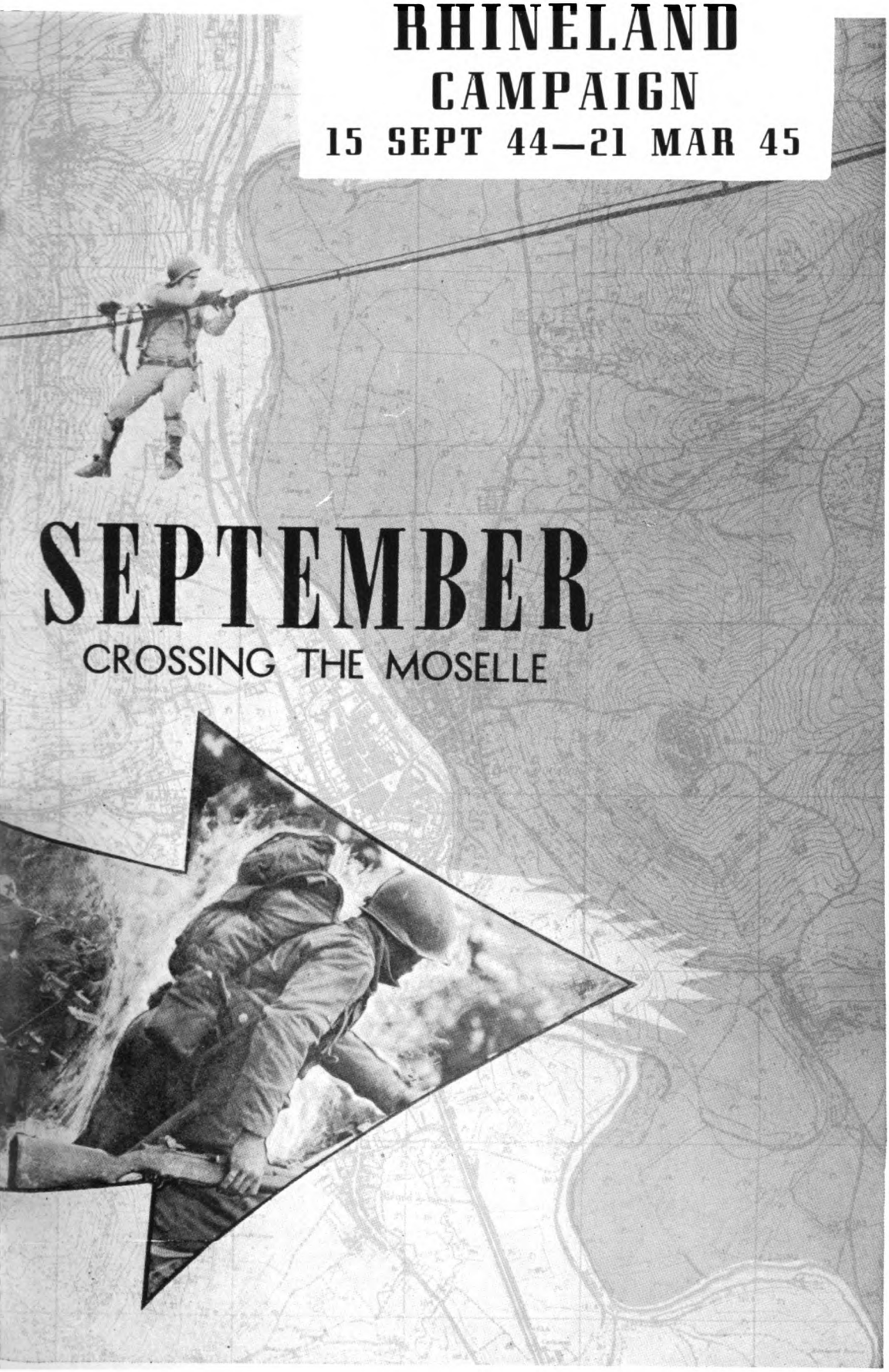
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RHINELAND
CAMPAIGN
15 SEPT 44—21 MAR 45



SEPTEMBER
CROSSING THE MOSELLE

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CHAPTER VII

Sens - Troyes - Pithiviers - Montargis - Nancy

WITH the Chateaudun-Orleans area consolidated, the 35th Infantry Division was ready for its next operation. It was to be a continuation of the American blitz with the 137th attached to the 4th Armored Division. On 20 August, the Regiment, combined with elements of the 4th was divided into three parts. The 1st Battalion formed a team with Combat Command A; the 2nd Battalion and another armored battalion formed Combat Command B; the 3rd Battalion was attached to Combat Command R. One battery of the Santa Fe's 448th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion was also attached to the armor.

The plan for the coming move called for spectacular action. Sixty miles southeast of Paris was the city of Sens. Located on the navigable Yonne River, just below the junction with the Seine, this rail and highway center was reported to be a central supply point for the German strongpoints to the northwest as far as Paris and southwest to Montargis. The mission of Combat Commands A and B was to capture Sens and cut the supply route. Combat Command R was to remain in Orleans to secure the city.

Moving in a column of tanks, tanks destroyers, self-propelled artillery and trucks, the plan was for these forces to travel approximately 90 miles without flank protection. Caution was necessary as it was believed that the Germans were in considerable strength on the Loing River at Montargis and farther north at Fontainebleau. It was decided to move between these reported strongpoints and cross the Loing at Souppes, and then push east into Sens.

The success of such an operation depended largely on the surprise element as the enemy was unaware of the proximity of the Ameri-

"Explosive Mountain" near Sens



"A singed mustache"—Citizens of Montargis prepare to burn portrait of Hitler



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"Road clear"



"Ring around the Nazis"—People of Montargis burning Nazi possessions



Montargis street scene

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"For Montargis—Liberation Day"



"The Creek"—645th's T.D.'s cross
Madon River west of Moselle



"U. S. tank wrecker clears a road"

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"At last"—French Maquis Celebration of Pithiviers by 35th Division



"A Silver Star"—1st Lt. Leeta L. Casner, recipient for heroic action, St. Lo

"Road block"—Burning tanks of the Boche



can forces, due to his own shattered transportation and communication lines.

At 0900 on 21 August Combat Command A left Artenay and was followed four hours later by Combat Company B. Swinging through Patay and Ormes to Orleans, the column then turned northeast. Main highways as far as Nibelle were avoided where possible. The force moved through Trainou, Sully la Chapelle and Ingrannes, then turned east through the Chene Pointu Forest to Nibelle.

Here the cavalcade took to the main highways, moving into Boiscommun, east to St. Loup les Vignes, then to Juranville and Corbeilles. This was the first time these towns had seen allied troops since most of them had been occupied by German troops only the previous day.

Combat Command A proceeded northeast toward Sens, through Chateau-Landon and Souppes, then east through Egreville, Jouy, Montacher, St. Valerien, and Villeroy. Moving into Sens, the forces caught the Germans by complete surprise. Not a single casualty was suffered by the 137th Infantry and almost the entire German garrison was taken prisoner. Many Nazi officials were taken in dress uniform. They admitted that they had thought the Americans were miles away. By 2200 Sens was completely liberated. In occupying the city Combat Command A had now advanced farther east into France than any other allied troops yet reported. Combat Command B had reached Corbeilles at 2030, and remained east of that town for the night.

The next morning, Combat Command B moved on to Chateau Landon, but ran into enemy resistance at Souppes. This point had been passed by Combat Command A the previous day, but the Germans hadn't exposed themselves to make a stand. By noon, however, all resistance against Combat Command B had been wiped out with only small casualties suffered. Later in the day Combat

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Command B turned southeast and captured Courtenay and Douchy cutting the escape route east from Montargis.

At Sens the Yanks were enthusiastically welcomed by the delighted French, and, as in Orleans, there were numerous parades, demonstrations and public gatherings.

Caught unaware, the Nazis had no time to remove the huge piles of supplies they had gathered. Warehouses and storage caves yielded large stores of canned goods, flour, chocolate, and other foodstuffs. For many days afterward, Yanks had hotcakes for breakfast made from German buckwheat. There were also many enemy vehicles in good repair and a number of prisoners were captured.

Meanwhile the 134th and 320th had been active in another direction. On 21 August the 320th occupied the town of Pithiviers and the high ground in that vicinity without opposition, while the 134th began a movement to the east. The regiments were in combat team formation. Combat Team 134 operated with the 255th Field Artillery Battalion, Company A of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and one battery of the 448th Anti-Aircraft Artillery. Combat Team 320 was strengthened by the attachment of Company C of the 654th, the 127th Field Artillery Battalion and one battery of the 448th.

On 22 August, Combat Team 134 moved into the vicinity of Montargis and launched an attack on the city. In the afternoon an advance was made into the southwestern outskirts of the town. Scattered resistance was encountered, including road blocks and armored vehicles. By noon of 23 August, one battalion was advancing in an encircling movement around the southern edge of the town.

Combat Team 320, in the meantime, took positions on the high ground west of Montargis after fighting through light opposition



"Pontoon bridge to Nancy"



"Rush"

"Blitz in reverse—styles have changed"



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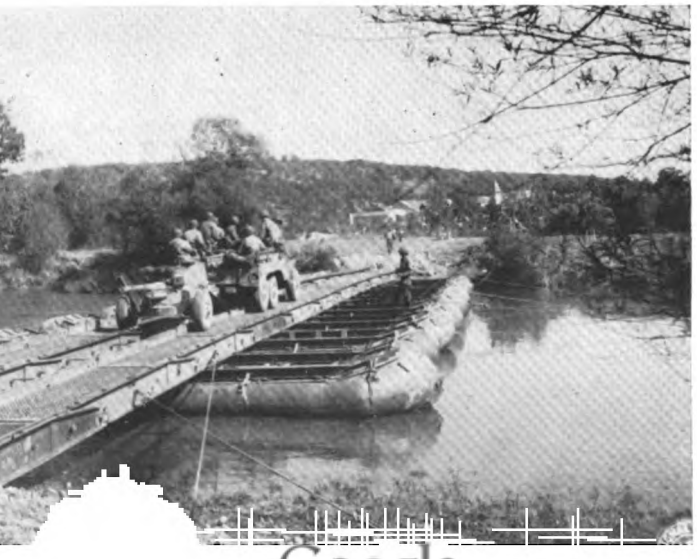


"Victors and vanquished"—after crossing the Moselle



"It's a pleasure"—Nancy citizens meet their liberators, the Santa Fe men

"Across the Moselle"



to the northeast. By nightfall Montargis had fallen to the combined operation of Combat Teams 134 and 320.

The next day Combat Team 320 moved by foot to the vicinity of Courtenay, conducting mopping up operations while en route. Combat Team 134 also advanced several kilometers east of Montargis and on 25 August, it moved by motor to Joigny, seizing and holding the town while patrolling south and east of it. Both Combat Teams mopped up in the Charny-Douchy-Montargis sector as far as St. Florentin and south of Joigny. Combat Team 134 alone captured over 900 prisoners on 26 August as the division counted 1134 in the Prisoner of War cage for the day.

The 137th then was released from 4th Armored control and continued on the mission of protecting the south flank of the XII Corps. This was also the south flank of the Third Army from Orleans to Troyes.

Intelligence reports indicated that the enemy might attempt a counter-attack with the objective of recapturing Troyes and breaking through the south flank of the Third Army. To prepare for this, Task Force "S" was assembled on 28 August consisting of Combat Team 320, 737th Tank Battalion and elements of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The mission was to protect Troyes from attacks from the east, southeast or south and to clear the area north of the Seine River from the city to a line from Vendeuvre to Bar sur Seine. The force did this and moved to the vicinity of Brienne le Chateau on 1 September. The remainder of the division continued its mission of flank protection until relieved by other XII Corps troops on 8 September.

With allied forces driving north from southern France and east from Normandy and Brittany, the next move of the 35th was to advance across the Moselle River below Nancy, take the city and open the way for

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a drive on the German border. Control of the Moselle and the Meurthe Rivers below Nancy was essential to the occupation of the city itself.

The first step in this operation was to occupy the high ground east of the Moselle River in order to cover any crossing that might be made. It was assumed that the Germans would blast all bridges over the river which they did. The 134th Infantry was ordered to attack to the north and the 137th to the south.

On 10 September the attack was made at 0800 and the 2nd Battalion, 137th, encountered artillery fire east of Houdelmont. They continued to drive forward. By 1300 they had crossed the north-south highway between Centerey and Benney Forest. A half hour later the battalion was in Benney Forest itself, while two miles south the 3rd Battalion had reached Lemainville. By 1700 the 137th was on the high ground west of the Moselle in a position to attempt a crossing the following morning.

The 134th advanced east from Thuilley-aux-Groseille on the same day and secured the west bank of the Moselle in its sector. At 2230 the 2nd Battalion had crossed a bridge over the river. Shortly after midnight the enemy counter-attacked while at the same time, the Luftwaffe tried to bomb the bridge. Enemy artillery also made the bridge a target and succeeded in destroying it. The 2nd Battalion, caught on the east bank of the river, fought back valiantly, but its losses were heavy as it was driven back across the river.

Fort de Pont St. Vincent was the dominating terrain feature in this area. Why the Germans abandoned it, no one knew. After Company A, 134th had occupied it, the Germans realizing their gross error, attacked. But the valiant men of Company A, realizing that they held a prize, drove the Germans off after a brisk fire fight.



"It's finished!!"



"Long Tom"—A convoy of 155mm's pass through France northeast of Nancy

"Into action"—35th advances northeast of Nancy



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On 11 September the 137th attempted to make two crossings of the Moselle—the 2nd Battalion near Crevechamps and the 3rd near Neuviller sur Moselle. The first to cross the Moselle from the 137th was 1st Lieutenant (later Captain) Joseph S. Giacobello, Mt. Union, Pennsylvania. With 15 men of Company F he crossed the river and was soon out of communication with the rest of the battalion. The remainder of Company F was pinned down most of the day on an island in the river below Crevechamps. The crossing was difficult because the Germans had blown all bridges from Flavigny south and they held strong positions on the east side of the river with machine gun emplacements on the steep bluffs overlooking it with well-placed artillery positions in the rear. The canal running parallel to the river's west bank was an added barrier.

The 2nd Battalion was unable to put additional forces across the river in the Crevechamps area that day and Lieutenant Giacobello and his men were the only Americans across the river at that point. Resistance was so great the battalion had to withdraw and attempt a crossing farther south.

Elements of the 3rd Battalion crossed the river in their sector during the day but were pinned down until late in the afternoon. At 1730, a coordinated attack was launched by the entire 137th with the 3rd Battalion in the center, the 2nd on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right. With heavy artillery support the 1st and 3rd each put two companies across the river by 1845 in the vicinity of Lorey and St. Mard.

The attack continued throughout the night and by the morning of 12 September the 1st Battalion had cleared all enemy resistance from the area around Lorey. The 2nd Battalion to the north crossed the river early in the afternoon, then worked back along the east bank and was rejoined by Lieutenant



"A friend"



"Keep your dogfoots dry"

"The old and new"—Moselle crossing near Crevechamps



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Giacobello and his men who had been thought lost.

A number of concrete pillboxes which were located in all battalion sectors were knocked out by artillery, bazookas and grenades. A former enemy Command Post and a large quantity of German equipment was captured.

With the area cleared by the 1st Battalion, it was possible to put a ferry across the river at Neuviller and shortly afterwards a treadway bridge was completed at that point by the 130th Engineers. By late afternoon, most of the 137th was across the river.

The Germans launched a counter-attack with armor and infantry in a desperate effort to throw the Santa Fe troops back into the Moselle, but, with the support of Company B of the 737th Tank Battalion, Company C of the 137th repelled the counter-attack and moved in to destroy an ammunition dump at Domptail. Racing to the left, they cleaned out the hills east of the river and then swung back between the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The 2nd Battalion then took Crevechamps after a large part of the town had been set on fire.

The 320th Infantry crossed the Moselle on 13 September and attacked north and east on the right flank of the 137th against artillery, mortar and small arms fire. Punching past Tonnoy, the regiments advanced rapidly and shortly occupied the high ground between Saffais and Coyviller, with the assault guns and tanks of the 737th in position to protect the left flank against attack from the direction of Flavigny.

During the afternoon Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., watched from an Observation Post as the 1st Battalion of the 320th Infantry and attached units drove the enemy from their positions.

On 14 September, the 1st Battalion of the 137th, together with elements of the 737th and 644th Tank Destroyers attacked Rosieres, the infantrymen riding atop tanks. This established the regiment on a line from the Moselle to the Meurthe River. The 137th put a force across the Meurthe strong enough to hold a position on the east bank, while the 320th continued to attack to the northeast, reaching the Meurthe on 15 September in the vicinity of Dombasle. At this point, General Baade, estimating that there was very little enemy artillery and mortar fire in this area, at noon ordered an immediate daylight crossing at Dombasle employing the fire power of all available tanks and tank destroyers. By 1600 the 1st Battalion, 320th, had forced a crossing of the river and the canal and the attack continued against enemy positions to high ground to the north. Extremely heavy fighting resulted in numerous enemy casualties and prisoners.

In the meantime, the 3rd Battalion, 320th, moved to the Rhine-Marne Canal and the Le Sanon River in the neighborhood of Sommerviller. This area was under heavy enemy artillery fire. But by nightfall, most of the foot elements were across the river and canal in their respective zones. The 4th Armored Division was also using the bridge at Sommerviller, an example of highly successful coordination. Tanks and tank destroyers of the 35th, operating with Combat Team 320th also crossed, and by early morning all vehicles were over. The 320th continued to advance with the 3rd Battalion in the lead, securing the town of Haraucourt after destroying small enemy forces. Then this same battalion attacked Buissoncourt and, against severe resistance, secured the town by dark. Many prisoners were taken, including the commander and eight staff officers of the enemy battalion defending the town. On 17 September the 320th took Mazurelles cutting the Nancy Chateau-Salins highway, the German escape route to the east.

Meanwhile, the 137th had cleared out the

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"Infantrymen and friends"—Troops and tanks cross field that is well defended by German automatic fire from woods, near Nancy

"Support"—737th Tank Bn. supporting 35th Inf. at Dombasle



"Rain, mud, shells"—Eight-inch Howitzers on the Nancy front



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wooded areas in its sector and taken high ground near Azelot and north of Manoncourt. The Germans had by now withdrawn most of their forces from that area between the Meurthe and Moselle Rivers, and the 1st Battalion of the 137th took St. Nicolas.

During this time Task Force "S" had been organized under XII Corps control by Brigadier General Sebree, composed of Combat Team 134th, less the 2nd Battalion; the 319th Infantry Regiment (80th Infantry Division); 905th Field Artillery Battalion; 696th Field Artillery Battalion; 161st Field Artillery Battalion; 974th Field Artillery Battalion; Company A of the 60th Engineers; Company A of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion; one company of the 110th Medical Battalion, and one battery of the 448th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion.

This force assembled east of Toul on 14 September with the definite objective of capturing Nancy. At the same time, to protect the advance of this task force from any flank attack across the Moselle River, a Task Force "T" had been organized under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. Thompson, consisting of the 2nd Battalion, 134th Infantry; the 35th Reconnaissance Troop and the 127th Field Artillery Battalion with the mission of protecting the west bank of the Moselle River from Ft. de Pont St. Vincent to the south.

At 0600 on 15 September Task Force "S" proceeded toward Nancy along the Toul-Nancy highway, with regiments in columns of battalions, the 319th leading and the 134th following. Since the 35th had completely outflanked the city, no enemy troops were encountered, but the roads and all the areas were heavily mined. The column moved quickly into Nancy and the artillery occupied the high ground about three miles west of the city.

Inside the city, as with all large French cities that had been liberated, chaos reigned. The French, their natural emotion and excitability released by their sudden freedom from the Nazi hell, ran about confusedly, seeking to ferret out collaborators, snipers, Germans, or anyone who threatened their newly-found happiness. Rumors flew thick and fast. By evening, with the arrival of more American troops, the excitement calmed and peace once again was known in Nancy.

The Germans had left hastily. It was a matter of pride that the city and vicinity were so thoroughly cleared that four days later the Santa Fe Rear Echelon, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Richard G. Chadwick, Lowell, Massachusetts, Adjutant General of the Division, occupied the barracks which up to the 10th of September had been occupied by German troops and known as Rommel's Barracks.

The 134th, eager as always to seize an opportunity, quickly threw a bridgehead across the Moselle, capturing the hills east of the city. The Germans viciously counter-attacked but the Nebraska regiment stood firm. Nancy was definitely liberated.

It is a matter of interest, too, that the day after Nancy was liberated, the great American entertainer Bing Crosby and his troupe entertained various elements of the Division.

The same day that the 134th entered Nancy, the 2nd Battalion of the 137th Infantry moved through Lupcourt to the high ground just east of the Canal de l'est Emb't de Nancy, and thence north to the Meurthe River. The 3rd Battalion moved from Manoncourt to the vicinity of Laneuveville. The regiment was now in a position to cross the Meurthe, which was accomplished in force the next morning. The 1st Battalion had crossed in assault boats and occupied Varrangeville.

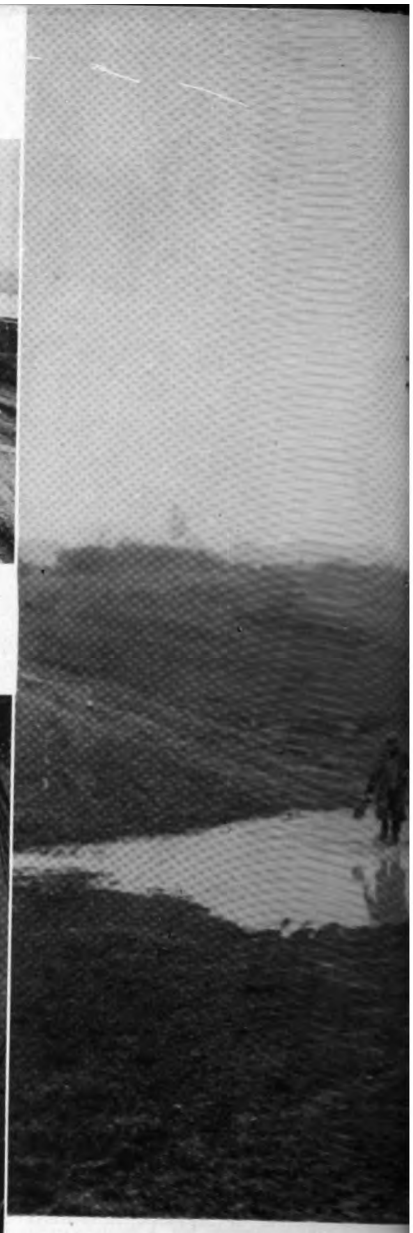
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"River guard"



"Infantrymen guard road"





"One 50 for a Bailey"



"Observing eyes"—Gen. Geo. C. Marshall and Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baade





"Combat cameraman"



"A Bailey moving across"

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"Artillery did this"

"Can't get wetter"—Typical October weather, near Nancy





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"And then we smash them again!"

troops. Division artillery was called for and the fire of nine battalions was focused on the area. Hundreds of the enemy were killed and a great amount of material was destroyed. The survivors of the debacle attempted to escape by breaking through the 2nd Battalion of the 137th at Chartreuse. They were completely annihilated by the combined fire of the artillery, the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 737th Tank Battalion which had by this time moved in from their river crossings.

On the morning of 17 September, the Division began an advance to the northwest with the 137th in the center, the 134th on its left and the 320th on the right. The 80th Division was operating to the north, and the 4th Armored had driven east as far as Bezange le Grand, south of Chambrey. In their swift advance they had necessarily

Farther south, at Rosieres-aux Salines the 150th Engineer Battalion had reinforced the bridge they had erected at that point to support the crossing of armor. The 737th Tank Battalion and the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion poured across this bridge and then swung north to cross the Le Sanon River at Sommerviller. Then they doubled back to the west to join the 137th Infantry.

The Germans had planned to entrap the troops of the 137th as they crossed to the east bank of the Meurthe. In the forest northeast of Chartreuse they had hidden a strong force supported by 20 tanks. Their plan was to allow the 2nd Battalion of the regiment to pass them and then to counterattack and cut off the battalion as it advanced to the north. The success of this Nazi plan might easily have spelled disaster.

But an alert aerial observer of the Santa Fe's artillery spotted the enemy activity in the woods, and further reconnaissance determined that the forest was alive with

"Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baade shows souvenir cane, inscribed with names of French liberated towns, to Gen. Patton"



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by-passed large concentrations of the enemy in the Champenoux Forest and other wooded areas in the vicinity. It became necessary for the 35th to mop up these isolated, though potent, groups.

By noon of 17 September, the 1st Battalion of the 137th had entered Lenoncourt, proceeding against artillery and mortar fire and heavy mine fields. The advance was continued, but on the morning of 19 September the Germans launched a heavy counter-attack in the vicinity of Agincourt, and drove the 134th from the high ground east of the town.

In the mists of early morning on 20 September, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 137th moved into what was to be one of the bloodiest battles the regiment had yet experienced. Both battalions advanced to the woods south of Highway 74, which leads from Nancy to Saarbrucken. The highway runs through an open valley, bordered on the north by a heavily-wooded slope. From this concealment the enemy had an almost unobstructed view of the highway and across the valley to the opposite slope, a thousand yards to the south.

As the troops came in range of the enemy they were hit by heavy machine gun and mortar fire. One platoon worked its way into the woods, but had to withdraw under the withering fire. At one point a German tank came out of the woods and fired point-blank at the troops. But no sooner had it retired to its place of concealment than the Yanks smashed into the woods and knocked out a machine gun nest that had been harassing them.

All through the day the struggle continued, fought without quarter on each side. The men of the Santa Fe made repeated attempts to rush the woods, but each time they advanced over the open terrain, they were pinned down by machine gun fire and



"Battle small pox"—American artillery leaves its mark

then heavily shelled by mortars. In the early morning of 21 September, 35th Artillery began a continuous barrage on the positions in the woods, which was amplified by air support at daybreak. Still the enemy fought stubbornly from their well-entrenched cover.

In two days of fighting only one Santa Fe platoon had been able to penetrate the woods, and they were out of communication with their company. It was clear that only a concentrated attack, supported by armor, could clear this area.

Combat Command B of the 6th Armored Division was attached to the 35th and on the morning of 22 September it was located north and in rear of the enemy in the Chapenoux woods. At noon a coordinated attack began. Following a heavy artillery preparation and air strike, the tanks of the Santa Fe's 737th Tank Battalion moved in with the infantry riding on them. The Germans met the attack from dug in positions on the south edge of the woods in an unbroken string of emplacements, each having an almost perfect field of fire. With a network of trails leading in and out of the woods,

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accessibility of supplies was facilitated and it was possible for the enemy to move tanks out to the fringe of the woods to fire, and then withdraw to another position. Once, however, the strongpoints on the edges of the woods were cracked, the main resistance would be broken.

Jumping off tanks as they approached the woods, the 137th drove into the position prepared for hand-to-hand combat. In less than an hour they had forced the enemy to withdraw and began the pursuit through the woods. Then Combat Command B of the 6th began closing the trap from the rear. American tanks were barking in all directions as the German withdrawal became a rout. The roads from Moulins to Bouxieres aux Chenes became a choked mass of enemy motor and horse-drawn artillery as the 134th charged forward from the hills east of Nancy.

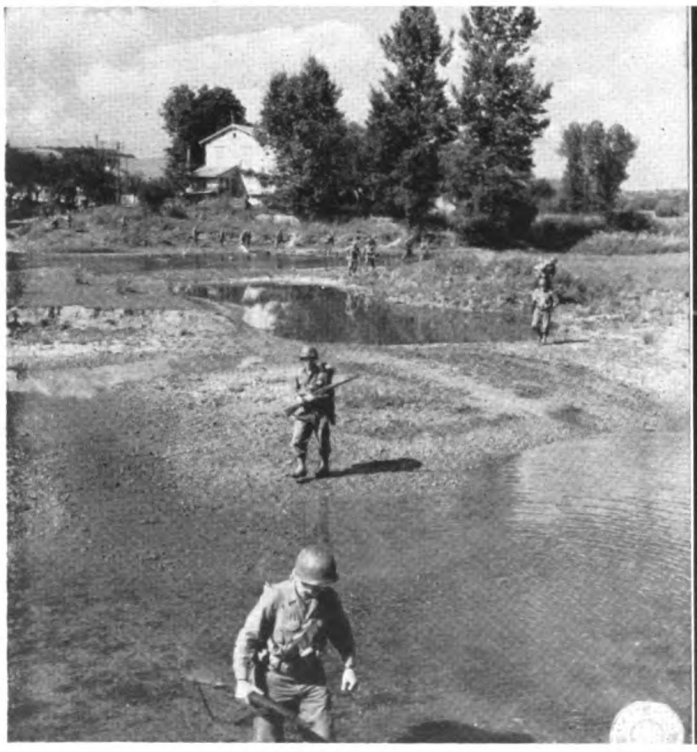
Hastening enemy troops struggled through the already packed highways, in some instances with columns four miles long. The 134th reported this mass retreat and air forces went to work on the fleeing Germans, strafing and bombing at will. Elements of the 137th not only took the woods, but also swung left and captured Amance and the high ground in order to forestall any further German concentration in that sector.

Throughout the next two days the Division continued to mop up the area, taking many prisoners and great quantities of booty.

The 35th was now running into the battlefields of World War I. Here were discovered vestiges of the old trench system of warfare, so different from the mobile one of today.

The enemy was finally able to reorganize

"35th Inf. crosses the Madon"



"Snipers eye-view"—Dombasle



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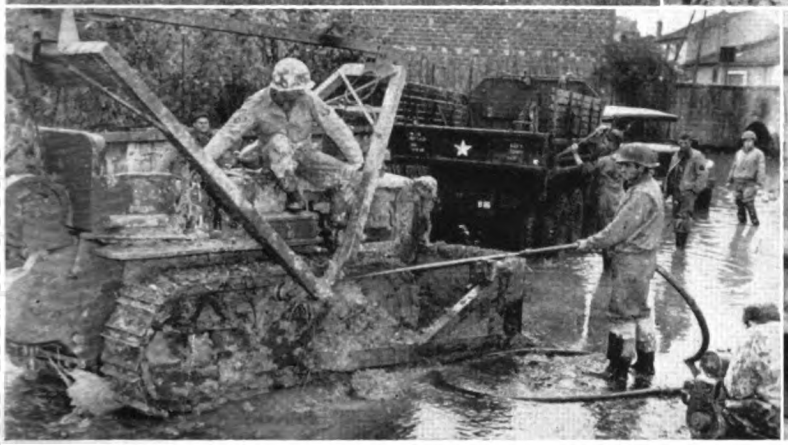
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"Move along"—Prisoner taken at Dombasle



"K. P.'s nightmare"





"It's under mud"



"New Order—Disorder"

the remnants of his scattered army in the vicinity of Gremecey and the Chateau Salins Forest. Reinforcements were moved in from the north in such proportions as to suggest the possibility of a large scale counter-attack. So the XII Corps moved to defend a line from the Seille River, near Manhoue, east, then south through the Gremecey Forest facing the German-held towns of Coutures and Chambrey. The line then extended east and south through the Bezange la Grande Forest, with the 4th Armored defending this area. The 80th Division was in a position to the left of the 35th, and the 6th Armored remained east of Nancy in Corps reserve.

In the 35th Division sector, the 134th was on the left, the 137th on the right and the 320th in division reserve, having been released from 4th Armored Control.

Early in the afternoon of 26 September, the 3rd Battalion of the 137th received some artillery shelling in its area to the north and east of Gremecey. About 1800, a small German force attacked through the Chambrey Woods, from the direction of Coutures, but was driven back during the night. The next morning, Nazi artillery fire increased and enemy planes began to circle overhead. The Americans grimly awaited the attack which was certain to come. Shortly after 0700 the enemy, moving west on the Chambrey-Pettoncourt Highway, overran a road block, captured four anti-tank guns and placed themselves in a position to bring direct fire into Pettoncourt. The 1st Battalion of the 137th had been bolstered by the addition of

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two companies from the 2nd Battalion, but their position was still precarious. Seeing the danger, the Division Commander, General Baade, ordered the 1st Battalion of the 320th and Company C of the 737th Tank Battalion to support the defenders of the threatened area.

During this action the versatility of the American soldier was displayed by men of Gun Section No. 4 of the 448th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion. Stationed on the outskirts of Pettoncourt, they saw a file of Germans descending a nearby slope. Losing no time in changing from their primary mission of anti-aircraft defense to ground defense, they poured 11 rounds of high explosive 40mm into the file. Eight of the enemy were killed and the complete formation dispersed. In this manner a probable surprise attack on the Division flank was averted.

By 1130 the enemy was forced back sufficiently to recover three anti-tank guns, and by early afternoon the 1st Battalion of the 137th had restored its lines to original positions, clearing Pettoncourt and the roads leading into it from the danger of direct enemy fire.

The Nazis had failed in their initial attempt; but they were determined to carry through the attack. Late in the afternoon, a heavy force attacked Fresnes and drove outposts from the town. During the night and into the early hours of the morning there was constant patrol action by the enemy, probing at lines and seeking to find a soft spot in them. The Division had its own patrols out also slithering through the darkness, seeking the enemy's strength. By daylight, it was learned that in addition to the concentrations of infantry north of the 137th area, the Germans had moved up heavy armor in large numbers.

When the enemy attack did come, it was in a rush. By noon a strong German patrol had infiltrated behind the Command Post of

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the 3rd Battalion of the 137th and captured the Battalion motor pool. With the Command Post and the right flank of the battalion endangered, the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Albert M. Butler, Hastings, Nebraska, committed his headquarters and all available men. Company F and one platoon of tanks were sent to relieve the precarious condition.

Enemy tanks continued to move into the 3rd Battalion area, but between 1000 and 1300, Company B of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion had knocked out five tanks, three of them Tigers, and one self-propelled gun. Enemy patrols had again infiltrated into the area and the battalion wire team was attacked by Germans with bazookas.

Late in the afternoon, with reports of enemy tanks mounting, the air corps was called to strike at Chambrey and west of Coutures, known to be a concentration area of the enemy armored force. Fighter-Bombers strafed and bombed heavily and also attacked Jallaucourt to the northwest. The air attacks continued until darkness and the 137th was able to strengthen its lines.

The main German attack came at 0530 on 29 September, the enemy moving in from the direction of Fresnesen-Saulnois. Company L of the 137th was in the northeast tip of the Gremecey Forest and was the first to be hit. They determined to hold fast while the other companies strengthened their lines. By 0830 they were completely surrounded. Fighting like tigers, Company L tore through the encirclement of German forces and freed themselves from the trap. Their Commanding Officer, 1st Lieutenant Rex Hooper, Phoenix, Arizona, was wounded, and his Executive Officer, 1st Lieutenant Lawrence Malmed, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was captured. But Lieutenant Malmed, who was no stranger to the ways of the Germans, not only talked his captors into releasing him, but brought twelve of them







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"Approach march"



"And across"



"Mess hall"

back to his own lines as prisoners.

The Germans continued their tactics of infiltrating and surrounding troops with co-ordinated drives from the northeast against the 137th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion of the 134th from the north. L Company, commanded by Captain Greenlei, Hastings, Nebraska, bore the brunt of the attack. It was evident that the enemy must be cleared from the Gremecey Forest before they had an opportunity to regroup for a large scale thrust.

Early in the morning of 30 September, an attempt was made by the 320th and 137th to drive the Germans from Gremecey Woods. But attack in the forest was difficult, and heavy mortar fire forced the 2nd Battalion of the 137th back. The Germans continued their infiltration, moving in behind Company E and cutting off one platoon. During this action Major Wm. G. Gillis, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 320th, Cameron,

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Texas, was killed while leading his troops.

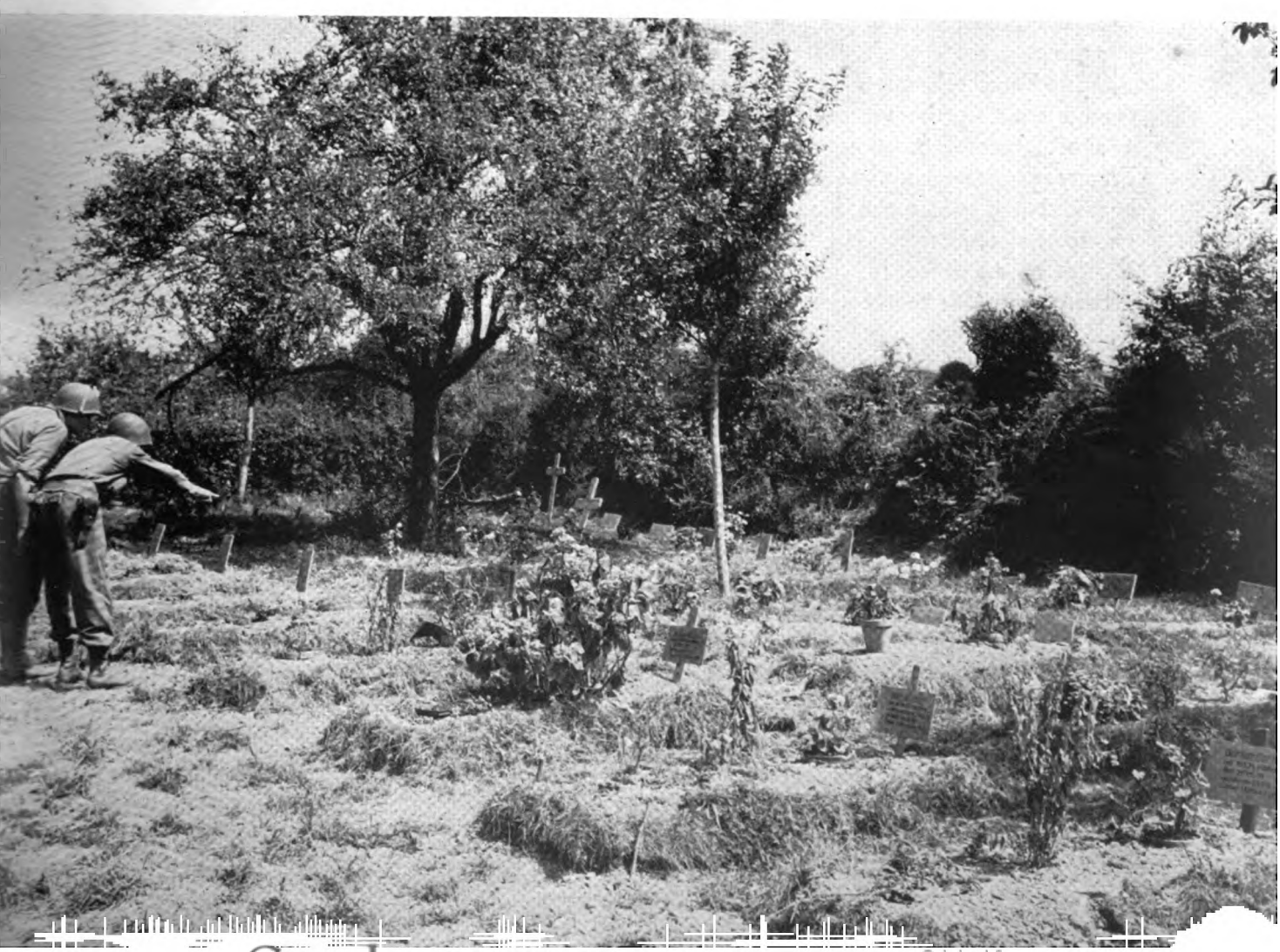
With the left flank open and a 700-yard gap between the companies, the 2nd Battalion's 137th defenses were in grave danger. The Germans, throwing a barrage of mortar and machine gun fire before them, poured through the gap to the left of Company E and moved in toward Gremecey.

The 2nd Battalion, 320th Infantry, fighting a rear guard action was rushed in from the vicinity of Rhis de Bois in time to help stop the break-through. With their assistance, the Germans were held off until the lines were once again firmly established. The stiffening of resistance caused the Nazi attack to cease for the day.

As nightfall came on 30 September, the 137th was opposed by strong German forces from a point midway between Pettoncourt and Chambrey on the Seille River, northward to the edge of the Gremecey Forest. Within the Gremecey Forest, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 320th and the 3rd Battalion, 137th, were in position, tying in with the 134th southeast of Fresnes. From there, the 134th extended west to Manhoue.

A coordinated attack by the 6th Armored Division and the 35th was ordered for 1 October in an effort to repel the Germans from the Gremecey Woods. The 3rd Bat-

"And they died in vain"



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"Camouflaged fixit shop"



"Take a break"

talion, 134th, the 137th, 320th, Combat Command A and Task Force Hines of the 6th Armored jumped off at 0930, intent on reestablishing the lines on the east edge of Gremecey Forest and, in addition, taking the town of Chambrey which remained a German stronghold despite the artillery and aerial pounding.

Task Force Hines moved swiftly over the open terrain in the vicinity of Merlinsole, a short distance northwest of Chambrey. Enemy artillery showered them, inflicting heavy casualties, but the Task Force pushed on to its objective. The 2nd Battalion, 137th, advanced to the east and by mid-afternoon was at the southwest edge of the Bois de Chambrey. A concentrated attack was launched to the north to clear the woods of the enemy and reestablish the defensive position on the east end of the woods. Company B of the 137th also advanced, and by 1700, it was fighting in the streets of Chambrey against a superior force.

In about three hours, the company had established itself in the town and driven the Germans about a thousand yards to the east and northeast.

It was during this fight that General Baade was wounded by a shell splinter from German artillery. He was operated on at the Division Medical Clearing Company and returned to command the Santa Fe on the following morning.

The manner of the German concentration led General Sebree, who was temporarily in command during General Baade's absence, to believe that they would make a counter-offensive and try to recapture the town. All the Battalion anti-tank guns were moved into the approaches to the town, and road blocks were placed on all roads leading into it. General Sebree intended to hold his hard fought for advantages at all costs.

Meanwhile, tanks from the 737th were employed to pin down the enemy in the woods, while the 137th's 2nd Battalion and Company A advanced north. By dark they reached a point only a few hundred yards away from the eastern edge of the Bois de Chambrey. The 320th continued to punch at the Germans and advanced to the east against bitter resistance. The 2nd Battalion, attacking behind artillery preparation, routed the enemy out of recently re-enforced World War I fortifications penetrating the eastern edge of Gremecey Forest. Combat Command A of the 6th accomplished its mission without difficulty.

The expected German counter-attack against Chambrey did not materialize and the next few days were spent in improving the defensive positions. Barbed wire was laid and the men of the 60th Engineers (C) Battalion dug up the German minefields and

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re-laid them to aid in the defense.

During the lull, Lieutenant General Patton visited the Division area and, among other things, personally congratulated General Baade and Colonel Sears, Commanding Officer of the 137th, for the fine stand that had been made.

At this period the Germans, gloating over the capture a few days before of a number of men from Company K, 137th, shot propaganda leaflets into Division lines assuring that the Germans would never be conquered and taunting the 35th for fighting and dying in vain. "Give yourselves up to us," they persuaded, "and save your lives for future happiness." Santa Fe men laughed at the leaflets and sent them home as souvenirs.

On 8 October it was decided to establish a new main line of resistance on the left portion of the Division sector by pushing north to a line from Ajoncourt through Fossieux to the Foret de Gremecey. Following a 30-minute counter-battery and a 10-minute artillery preparation, the 134th, with the 3rd Battalion, 137th, Company B, 86 Chemical Battalion and the 737th Tanks, attacked at 0615. This attack was coordinated with the 80th Division and Combat Command B, 6th Armored Division on the left in a Corps effort to enlarge the bridgehead east of the Moselle River.

Riding on the tanks of the 737th, the 137th's 3rd Battalion spearheaded the attack and drove against opposition to the northwest. At 0930, Company L was at the edge of Fossieux, and Company K was east of the Fossieux-Ajoncourt Road, while Company M was inside the town itself.

It was a day of revenge for Company K. Still rankling from the casualties inflicted on them in the Foret de Gremecey and the humiliation of the Nazi psychological barbs, they threw themselves into the fight with such spirit that by noon they had taken over a hundred prisoners.

To the left of this action, Company F, 134th mopped up after elements of Combat Command B, 6th Armored. Pushing north they arrived at Arraye-et-Han and Ajoncourt early in the afternoon. The 134th's attack to gain the new main line of resistance having been successful, the XII Corps ordered the Division sector defended along the line it now held. But the enemy had other ideas. On the morning of 9 October they launched a fierce counter-attack to retake Fossieux with tank-supported infantry. Company A, 134th, Company L, and Company K, 137th, were ordered to meet the threat in and around the town.

During the morning, six enemy tanks ventured forth from their well-concealed hiding

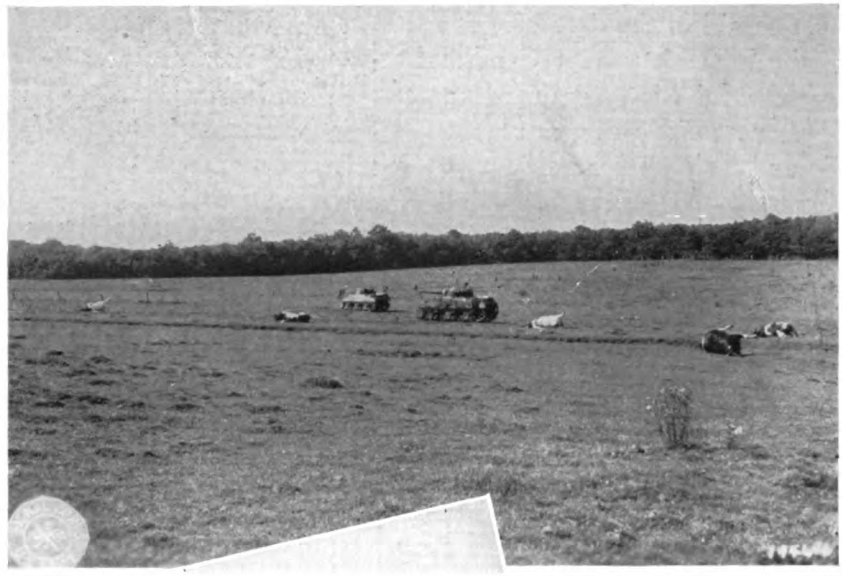
"Put-put special"



"Straw and logs"



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737th Tank Bn. armor moves in support near Nancy



35th Inf. "feather their nest" somewhere in France

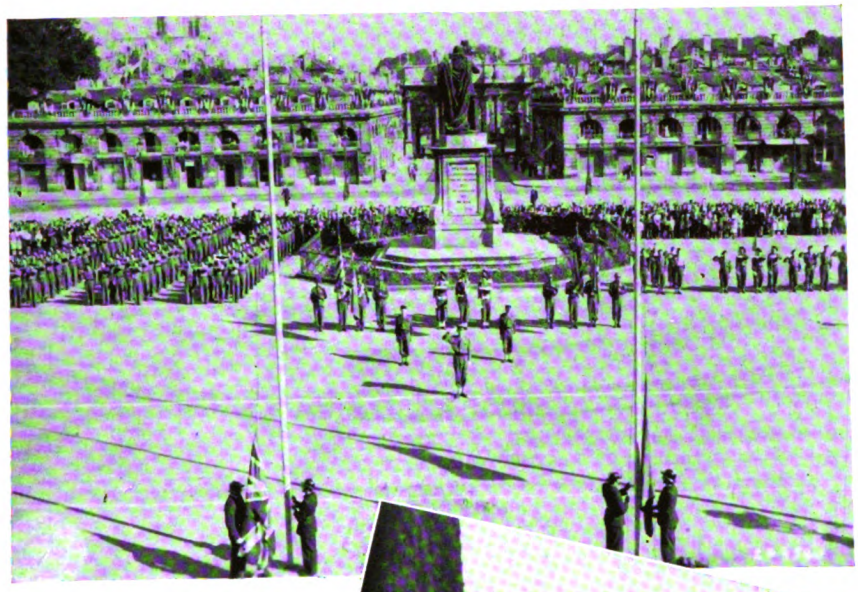


Red Cross coffee and doughnuts near Nancy



Communication men report situation—Infantry advance under tank support—Nancy, France

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Bastille Day—Nancy, France
35th Div. took town on
Sept. 15, 1944





654th Tank Destroyers support 35th Inf. advance—
Fresne, France



German prisoners ford small stream on their march to the rear—Dombas'e, France

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"S-mine toll"



"Mess kit meditation of home"

places in the wall of the northern part of Fossieux, only to find tank destroyers of the 654th patiently waiting for them. Four of the tanks were knocked out and a hit scored on a fifth. The fighting continued throughout the day and the next morning. When the remaining tank was destroyed, the enemy finally retreated from Fossieux. An artillery liaison plane was greatly responsible for directing artillery fire to assist in the destruction of these tanks.

In order to neutralize any further mechanized attack which the enemy might launch on the 35th's left flank, six bridges over the Seille River, all in enemy territory, were blown by demolition men from the 60th Engineers, using a tank-infantry-engineer team. The engineers and the infantry, commanded by Captain Denny, C Company, 134th, rode to the bridges on the tanks, and while the engineers placed their explosive charges, the infantry and tanks provided the necessary covering fire.

On 10 October, General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, in company with Lieutenant General Thomas T. Handy, Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr. and Major General Manton S. Eddy, visited the 35th. General Marshall asked many questions, but appeared to be especially concerned with the condition of the enlisted men, and whether they had adequate clothing and supplies for their comfort.

Other than continuous patrolling and improvement of defense lines, there was little activity in the 35th sector for the next few days. Artillery and aircraft continuously harassed the woods southwest of Lemoncourt, where the enemy was trying to regroup his forces. The 35th sector was intermittently shelled by the enemy, especially with a railroad gun which the Germans shuttled up and down the area. On the night of 11 October, friendly aircraft destroyed one such gun.

The 320th held the right side of the line, and the 134th the left sector, while the 137th took a much needed rest in division reserve. On 15 October, the 137th relieved the 134th on the left.

Sixteen miles east of the Division area,

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"Chow time—Nancy front"



"Shampoo—Nancy style"

near Dieuze, was the Etange de Lindre, a large artificial lake formed by the damming of the Seille River at Lindre Basse. The Germans controlled the lake and the dam and were in a position to release the impounded water at any time. The Seille Valley would be flooded through German-held Sallennes, on through Chambrey, circling the Santa Fe sector including Alincourt, Aboncourt, Manhoue and Ajoncourt, and beyond again to German-held territory to the north.

Flooding the valley, coordinated with an enemy attack of sufficient force might result in the trapping of a considerable number of 35th men in the bend of the river. Since the enemy was known not to be strong enough to make an attack at this time, the Army decided to forestall any such plans by blowing the dam. An immediate innundation would bog down the enemy at their strongpoints at Dieuze, Marsal and Vic-sur-Seille and destroy the possibility of a surprise future counter-attack.

The Engineers removed all the Bailey bridges over the river which would be affected by the flood, leaving only those at Ajoncourt, Manhoue and Pettoncourt. Dykes were constructed where necessary and the 543rd Amphibious Truck Company was attached in the event an unforeseen flood level was reached. Rations and supplies were provided for the units to be isolated by the flooding.

Shortly before noon on 20 October, when all was in readiness, a formation of 12 P-47's skip-bombed the dam, using 1,000 pound bombs. A breach of about 50 feet was made in the dam, flooding the town of Dieuze and spreading out over the surrounding lowlands. In the Division sector the water rose five feet in 72 hours, and remained at that level for five days before gradually receding. Although the water rose to the level of the dykes, they adequately protected the road and the bridges, so that traffic was not curtailed during the flood stage. Except for sporadic shelling by the Germans, and for constant patrol work, the division front remained static until 7 November.

At about 1300 on 21 October, the Santa Fe encountered its first robot bomb. It landed in a forest south of Lay St. Chris-

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"Wash job"

topher, but did no damage.

On 24 October, during the early morning hours, large caliber artillery, believed to be German railroad guns, pumped 17 rounds into the city of Nancy and the adjoining suburb of St. Max. Several landed in the immediate vicinity of the Division Quartermaster, but no damage was done to military installations. The same day, the 134th relieved the 320th on the division's eastern front and the latter went into division reserve.

On 25 October, Army Psychological Warfare Group began a five day intensive campagn on the Division front. A loud speaker system was employed to deliver messages to the Germans and their lines were flooded with safe-conduct passes. Just how effective the messages were could not be determined at the time. On the last day of the campaign, Company K of the 137th decided not to rely on psychology, but went out and captured a Nazi prisoner by force. This Nazi told of the new German weapon called a "pupchen." He described it as an anti-tank rocket gun, compact and easily handled,

"Wash day and draw poker"



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"Battle sanitation"

with a barrel about one meter long. It fired a 75mm rocket with an effective range of 200 yards against a tank.

In addition to regular defense work, the 60th Engineers constructed a corduroy road near Chambrey for the use of the ammunition trains of the 216th Battalion. Over 10,000 timbers were used and it was believed to be the longest corduroy road constructed in the ETO at that time. It was built in only eight days.

On the last day of October, Colonel Sears, who had so capably led the 137th since 25 July, received orders which took him from the regiment. At midnight the command was taken by Colonel William S. Murray, Nogales, Arizona, formerly of the 5th Infantry Division.

The Third Army's defense during this time was merely in preparation for a new big push. If the Germans thought that the Third could be stopped permanently, they were vastly mistaken. The halt was of the Allied Command's choosing and not due to any move by the Wehrmacht.

"Combat inspection"



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The following letter, while commending the 35th Infantry Division for its valiant part in the liberation of France, indicated the shape of things to come:

HEADQUARTERS XII CORPS

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APO 302, U. S. Army

14 October 1944

Major General Paul W. Baade
Commanding, 35th Infantry Division
APO 35, U. S. Army

Dear General Baade:

The fighting of the last few weeks has punched home to us one point so obvious and so clean cut, that I want every soldier and every officer in the Corps to realize its full significance. That point is this: *The Germans, even the best and most experienced are visibly frightened of us.* They are frightened by your superior equipment, frightened by your more skillful tactics, and above all, frightened by your magnificent courage and will to win.

Since the beginning of your memorable drive from Le Mans through Chateaudun and Orleans, the 35th Infantry Division has met its assigned tasks with distinction. It seized Pithiviers and Montargis, and assumed the prodigious task of protecting the south flank of the Army and the XII Corps from Orleans to the east. Despite vigorous enemy counter-attacks it has played a major part in the establishing, defending and enlarging of our bridgehead across the Moselle. All members of the Division have conducted themselves in a manner of which they may well be proud.

We are now between rounds of a fight to the knockout. The last round saw you stagger the German back into his corner. While we are now gathering our strength for the kill, he is hanging on the ropes. He cannot last another—he is bound to go down. I am confident when the next round comes up that the 35th Division will continue to show him the same courage, the same skill, and the same driving determination that have won for it its successes to date.

I congratulate the 35th Division on its past—I wish it Godspeed and early victory in its future.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ M. S. Eddy

/t/ M. S. EDDY

Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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1st Ind.

Hq. 35th INF. DIV., APO 35, U. S. Army, 17 Oct. 44

TO: All Officers and Enlisted Men, 35th Inf. Div., same address.

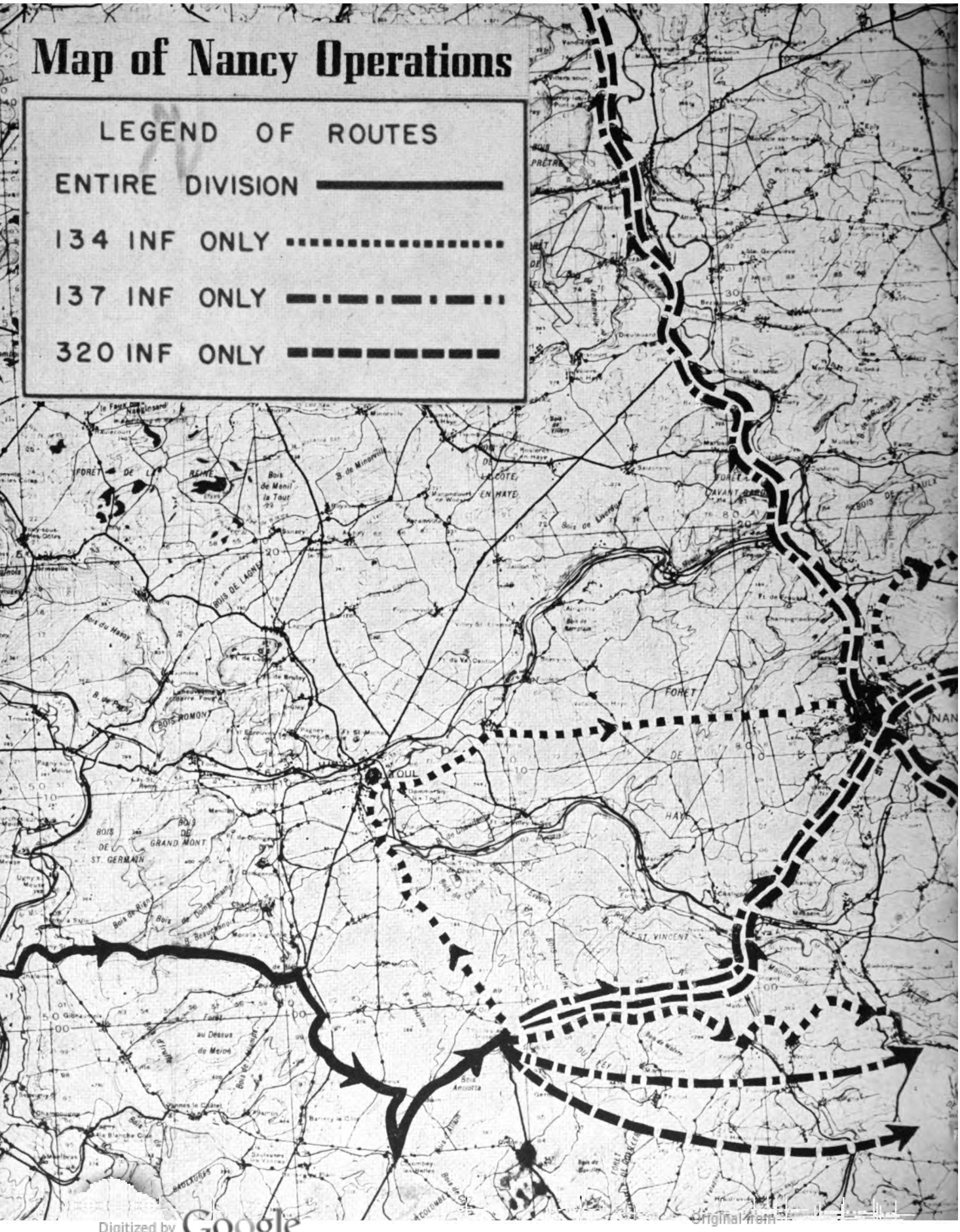
1. No one knows better than each of you how true the Corps Commander's words are. Each individual in this division has given his best—the proof is the record. As we prepare ourselves to continue on our march to victory against the inferior enemy, I urge every officer and enlisted man to inventory his knowledge of his job and his weapons—Train! Practice! Ask questions! Let's go in for the kill with every ounce of strength, knowledge and determination we have.

2. I desire that every commander insure himself that all members of his command receive full knowledge of this letter to which I add my sincere appreciation and heartfelt congratulations for your splendid achievements.

/s/ Paul W. Baade
/t/ PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

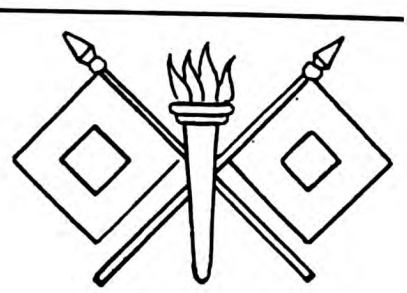
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CHAPTER VIII

North of Nancy

ON 7 November General Baade issued Field Order No. 26 which contained instructions for the 35th Division's attack on 0600 8 November in the winter offensive of the Allied Armies on the Western Front. Thus notice was served on the German Wehrmacht that they were to be granted no winter breathing spell.

In this new operation, the XII Corps was to attack to the northeast to seize rail and highway facilities in the vicinity of Falkenburg, prepared to continue the advance to the northeast and seize a bridgehead east of the Rhine River. Within the Corps the 26th, 35th and 80th Infantry Divisions were to attack in the order named from right to left. The 6th Armored Division would operate in the zone of the 80th Division and the 4th Armored that of the 35th, passing through the west and north portion of the 35th zone after Santa Fe troops had secured a bridgehead across the Rau d'Osson.

The Santa Fe was also to have close fighter-bomber support and five additional field artillery battalions: 191st, 802nd, 253rd, 179th and 738th in direct support. The 4th Armored Division Artillery was also supporting the 35th as was the 1135th Engineer (C) Group.

Within the Division zone the 137th was to operate on the left and the 320th on the right. The 134th was initially in division reserve.

On the morning of 8 November, after a 70-minute preparation by the artillery, the division attacked at 0600. The 1st Battalion on the right of the 137th sector pointed for Jallaucourt and by 0720 had one platoon in the shell-wrecked town. But soon the battalion was pinned down by heavy enemy fire from the Jure Woods on the right.

The 2nd Battalion of the 137th reached the edge of Malaucourt at 0750, but on their left they were encountering difficulty in crossing the Rau d'Osson, where flood waters of the Seille had backed up into the normally small stream. However, during the latter

"And then Germany"

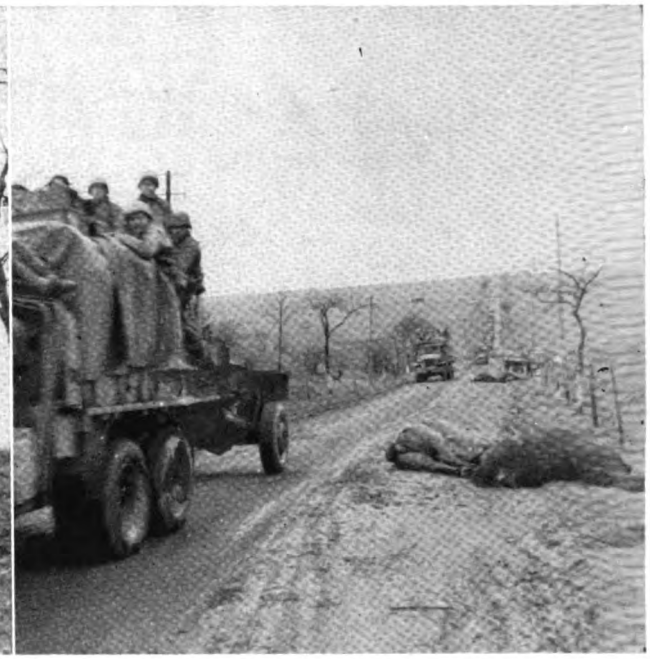


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"One less S. S."



"Towards Germany"

part of the morning they crossed and took the high bridge northwest of Malaucourt and fought into the town itself. By evening, supported by armor, the 35th had cleared Jallaucourt, and the 137th was fighting in the Jure Woods.

The 3rd Battalion, 320th with Company C of the 737th Tank Battalion attached, had also jumped off at 0600, and in less than an hour and a half had moved into Fresnes. By noon the 2nd Battalion was starting to enter the heavily fortified Forest de Chateau Salins after crossing the open approaches under heavy and intense mortar and artillery fire.

The next day the 137th struck toward Oriocourt, two miles northeast of Jallaucourt, and the Saulnois Woods. Moderate resistance was encountered inside the woods, but the men advanced steadily. By 1400 these woods had been cleared and the 137th moved on toward Lemoncourt.

The 1st Battalion of the 137th then took Oriocourt, capturing 150 prisoners and an entire battery of field artillery. Then they turned east, crossing the Metz-Chateau Salins Railroad and Highway, seized Laneuveville and occupied the high ground east of the town.

Lemoncourt was then taken and, two kilometers to the north, Delme was occupied. The German withdrawal was now becoming more hurried, and as the Santa Fe overran one position after another, the Germans began to surrender in large groups.

The 4th Armored moved up during the day, passing through Malaucourt and Lemoncourt. Elements of the 4th then thrust beyond the 35th's lines to Viviers, but during the night the Germans retook the town, capturing two ambulances and four wounded Americans.

The next day the 137th set out with the object of retaking Viviers, and occupying the woods south of the town. They moved east from the Delme-Con-Jeux area, and together with the 4th Armored, attacked from the south at about 1100. Tough resistance was

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met as the Germans had now erected defenses in the town and laid down heavy artillery fire from the east. Tanks were having a great deal of trouble maneuvering because of the deep mud, but the doughboys kept up their pressure. After a full afternoon of fighting, the 137th had E and F Companies in Viviers.

Viviers was aflame and the battle raged from house to house. Before the day was out, however, it was secured and fifty prisoners were taken and many more Germans killed or wounded. Rescued were the four wounded Americans who had been captured the previous day and one of the two lost ambulances was recovered.

Meanwhile, the 320th was still clearing the Chateau Salins Forest in a bitter battle. On the 9th, the 134th, which had been in division reserve, entered the fight, aided in clearing the woods south of Coutures and captured the town itself. Despite intense machine gun and mortar fire the regiment continued its advance and took Amelecourt.

The Germans were now off balance and the 134th moved in to deliver the knockout blow. On Armistice Day, Gerbecourt fell. Along the Chateau Salins-Sarreguemines highway the regiment advanced as Vaxy, Vannecourt and Achain were liberated.

It was in the battle of Achain that Staff Sergeant Junior J. Spurrior, Bluefield, W. Virginia, 2nd Battalion, 134th, became the first winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Santa Fe. Spurrior was literally a "one man army" as he moved into the town alone and single handedly killed twenty-five Germans and captured two officers and eighteen enlisted men. It was a "Double envelopment" with Spurrior swing-

"Luncheon in Ajoncourt"



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ing in from the west while the 2nd Battalion came from the east.

The other fighting on Armistice Day centered around Fontenay. The enemy had been expected to follow his usual tactics and withdraw during the previous night. Such was not the case; on the contrary, daylight found the Germans occupying the town in considerable strength. In addition there were strong positions on the high ground behind Fontenay and in the woods to the southwest. But by midafternoon the 137th had cleared much of the town and as darkness fell they were in possession of most of it.

Faxe also proved a stubborn bastion during this time. The Germans had built a great anti-tank ditch here which they defended with cleverly emplaced anti-tank guns. It was an infantry job and the next morning the 137th forced the defenses and by 0825 were mopping up the town itself.

Moving swiftly out of Faxe and through the Serres Woods, the 35th dashed east and seized Oron with such speed that the Germans were unable to carry out their planned demolition of the bridge across the La Niad Francaise Rau, west of the town.

The 3rd Battalion of the 137th sped across-country toward Chateau Brehain, skirted the north edge of the woods and took the town by 1400. Before dark they had also secured the town of Brehain.

The next morning they were slowed down by heavy small arms fire from a hill outside of Brehain. But the battalion engaged the enemy with frontal fire, and then slipped sufficient troops around the hill to get in the rear of the German positions. Twenty-five prisoners were captured and the remainder were forced to pull out. Moving northeast, the battalion reached the crossroads midway between Marthille and Achain by noon, and then advanced along the main highway toward Baronville. Directly north of Achain they ran into strong enemy positions which were immediately attacked and taken. But heavy fire was coming down from the high ground to the northeast. Without hesitation, 137th troops attacked and dislodged the Germans from this harassing position. Meanwhile the 137th's 2nd Battalion had attacked Villers-sur-Nied, and after a street battle had driven the enemy from the town and gone on to take Marthille.

On the 12th of November the 134th had seized Dalhain and Bellange and gone on the next morning to take Haboudange and attack to the north on Pevange. The artillery and small arms fire was intense, but they moved on to occupy the west slope of the high ground northeast of the town and also the high ground north of Achain. Fighting continued through the night, but when the morning came the town was captured. They then moved on to take Rode.

The 320th completed its mission of clearing the Chateau Salins Forest of the enemy and went into division reserve.

The attack on Baronville on 14 November was characterized by stubborn fighting by the Germans. Despite repeated assaults they resisted with their tanks and infantry from dug-in positions. About 1600, however, the pressure was too great and the 35th broke through and pursued the fighting into the town, which was cleared finally at 1710.

The same day, in conjunction with Combat Command B of the 4th Armored, the division attacked Destry. Though the armor was held up for a while by heavy artillery action, shortly after noon the tanks by-passed the town and the 2nd Battalion, 137th, entered, securing it by evening. Patrols were then sent to the railroad, two kilometers northeast of the town. Again the division was on the objective.

It was clear that the enemy was desperately plugging the gaps in his line with troops hastily taken from any other point where they weren't needed so badly. Many

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"Fire for effect"



"Forward O. P."



"Watering point"



"Pushing"

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Inspecting German 88 shells



"Save the road"—Rebuilding German-bombed dykes



"Browning and Bailey"

"Saarbrucken bridge yard"



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replacements had just arrived and without any orientation were thrown into the fray, armed only with basic weapons and an order to hold at all costs.

After seizing a portion of the Metz-Benestroff Railroad, the 3rd Battalion, 137th, jumped off during the afternoon of 15 November and in the face of heavy artillery fire, seized Hill 264 overlooking the railroad north of the Etange De Mutche.

The 134th was also busy during this period and had seized Hills 319, 257, 260 and 273, placing themselves in a position to attack Morhange. This was a garrison town in this section for the enemy and he had concentrated large stores of supplies and equipment here. A large portion of the east portion of the town was taken up by permanent German barracks.

On the night of 14 November, the 216th Field Artillery Battalion received its strangest mission. "Put 1,000 rounds into Morhange between now and 0600. Your sector is grid square 20-36. 20-37. and 21.37. Pick your own targets."

The battalion did not quite comply with the order. They only fired 999 rounds on 42 different targets. Other light artillery battalions had similar firing orders for other portions of the town.

At 1030 the next morning, following a 10-minute artillery preparation, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 134th, attacked the town and by mid-afternoon had captured it. Then the regiment proceeded to secure the railroad track northeast of the town.

The Santa Fe had moved so swiftly from the Chateau Salins Forest to Morhange that the Germans had been unable to move their materiel. The amount captured in this campaign was so great that it is of interest to list the items taken:

150mm artillery pieces	6
Rounds bazooka ammunition	500
Rounds artillery ammunition	5,005
Rounds small arms ammunition	100,000
Truckloads ammunition	2
Ammunition dumps	3
Wagon load of barbed wire	1
Tanks	28
Half-tracks	15
Cargo trucks	10
Motorcycles	6
105mm guns	6
88mm guns	15
75mm howitzers	4
Anti-tank guns	44
Anti-aircraft guns	13
Mortars	18
Rifles	893
Rounds 120mm mortar ammunition	30
Barrels rifle ammunition	10
20mm anti-aircraft guns	6
Chow wagons	3
Hand wagons	15
Rounds 88mm ammunition	510
Command car	1
Grenades	15,096
Pistols	47
Automatic rifles	19
Mines	274
Rounds 20mm ammunition	600
Personnel carriers	2
Panel body truck	1
Ambulance	1
Jeeps (American, recaptured)	2

In addition to this, close to 2,000 prisoners were captured.

On 18 November the 35th resumed the attack with the 137th and 320th abreast. The 137th jumped off at 0800, swung around the Etang de Mutche and proceeded toward Harprich from the south. Very little resistance was encountered, and the 1st Battalion entered the town at 0900. They were immediately subjected to artillery and mortar fire as the Germans laid down a terrific barrage along the Berig-Vintrange Road to harass any advances along that route. Nevertheless the Yanks moved on to Berig-Vintrange and

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"Aidmen return wounded—sled litter"



"Jerry 20mm A. A."

"Bridge near Ajoncourt"



there met the most stubborn resistance the Germans had offered for some time. The enemy had considerable armor in the town and held the high ground to the east.

Santa Fe artillery was directed on the town, knocking out three tanks. Shortly before noon the 654th Tank Destroyer vehicles moved in. Those Germans who were not already eliminated, withdrew to the high ground east of the town. Again the Yanks were subject to a withering fire.

Further advance at the time was impossible and the attack was held up for the night. But during the hours of darkness the engineers continued removing mines and other obstacles left by the Germans. Many of these mines, including road blocks, were encountered as the enemy used every available item from log and stone structures to hayrakes and other farm implements to delay the 35th's steady push.

The 3rd Battalion of the 137th had advanced rapidly during the day, taking the town of Bening, and by mid-afternoon secured Bistroff. The battalion had moved quickly across muddy terrain and surprised the enemy by a daring maneuver, operating far in advance of supporting weapons which were roadbound because of the mud. The surprise was so complete that the Germans could not counter-attack before carrying parties of the 137th had brought up ammunition and supplies. Anti-tank mines, hand-carried more than three miles, were placed to cover tank approaches to the battalion's position.

During the night the Germans blew up the bridge on the Bistroff-Berig Vintrange Road and shortly before midnight the 60th Engineers moved up and repaired it. The "Eager Beavers" could repair bridges almost as fast as the Germans could destroy them.

The next morning the Germans did counter-attack with tanks and infantry in an effort to regain Bistroff. One tank was knocked out immediately by mines and counter pres-

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sure as the 3rd Battalion, 137th, threw back the attack.

Then this battalion followed through with an attack of its own on Hill 315 to the northeast, taking a machine gun nest and 30 prisoners, several mortars and a 20mm gun. For their valiant action, the 3rd Battalion, 137th, became the third Santa Fe unit to win a Distinguished Unit Citation.

Combat Command B of the 6th Armored moved into the division area early on the morning of 19 November and passed on toward Bertring. They were met by heavy artillery and anti-tank fire, but kept on almost to Bertring where they were halted by an anti-tank ditch along the forward slope of the ridge to the west of the town. Santa Fe infantry then moved up, crossed the ditch and secured the town.

After the crossing the doughboys and tanks continued on to Gros-Tengquin and seized it after a heavy assault. Then they captured and outposted Hills 305 and 272, northeast of the village.

The 320th, in the meantime, had moved off on 19 November with the 1st and 2nd Battalions receiving considerable machine gun and mortar fire from Bermering. By noon the 2nd Battalion was assaulting the town from the north, while the 1st Battalion had passed to the northeast of Vallerange. The attack continued until late evening.

Finally, after overcoming strong resistance, the 2nd Battalion succeeded in clearing Bermering at 0745 the next day. The 1st Battalion continued the attack, but was held at Hill 265. Leaving Company A to contain the enemy here, B and C went on to seize Linstroff early on 20 November. Held up initially at the small woods about a mile east of Racrange, the 3rd Battalion, with the assistance of elements of the 4th Armored, cleared Virming by 1715. Going ahead the next day, they entered Francaltroff and cleared the town by nightfall. The same



"Clean up"



"Grasshopper inspection"

"Testing"—a field wire hook-up



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day the 35th occupied Erstroff and by dark had reached the edge of the woods north of the town.

On the morning of 20 November the 3rd Battalion, 137th Infantry, moved out from Bistroff toward Freybouse. After advancing over soggy terrain under heavy and intense artillery and mortar fire the battalion entered and captured Freybouse and another town north of it, Fremestroff.

The 2nd Battalion having jumped off the day before at 0900 in conjunction with Combat Command B, 6th Armored, attacked and cleared the Freybouse Woods. Resuming the attack on 21 November against resistance, they also captured Hellimer by nightfall.

On 22 November an order was issued by the XII Corps which changed the mission of the division. Under the new plan the 35th was to be pinched out after an advance of from four to five kilometers. The 80th Division and the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions were to continue the attack to the northeast. The 134th was attached to the 6th Armored.

That day the 320th drove on Petit-Tenquin and Grening. At Grening, at 0105, five enemy tanks supported by infantry attacked the 2nd Battalion positions, causing one company to fall back. The 3rd Battalion moved up to assist the 2nd, and together they managed to restore the original position. The enemy launched another attack at Company G south of the town, but artillery and infantry fire broke it up. At noon German tanks put direct fire into the 3rd Battalion in the woods north of the town. To nullify the effect of this fire, the troops pulled back into the cover of the woods.

During the afternoon, a patrol from Company L managed to enter Grening. Under continuous pressure during the night, the Nazis withdrew and the two battalions entered the town the next morning.

At the same time the 1st Battalion entered Petit-Tenquin and went on to seize Petit-Rohrbach. The 3rd Battalion occupied the town of Nelling and on 24 November attacked Rening and Insming. Both towns were under control by noon. The 1st Battalion next took Uberkinger and on the 25th the 320th took Hazembourg, Kappelkinger

"Wash day"



"Gas dump"



"Bellange, France, clean up"



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"Scanning"



"Liaison"—Artillery and observation planes, in Alsace-Lorraine

and Ventzviller.

On the morning of 22 November, the forces of the 137th cleared Fremestroff and moved on to Diffembach-les-Hellimer.

The 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry, together with tanks of the 6th Armored Division next attacked Leyviller. The town was enveloped from the left and the right and fell after a vicious battle, the Germans withdrawing to the north. The battalion quickly turned the attack toward the heavily garrisoned town of St. Jean Rohrbach, four kilometers east. As the Santa Fe troops advanced, enemy tanks on the outskirts of the town brought heavy fire to bear on them, heavy fighting continued until after dark.

The 2nd Battalion, 137th, moving towards Hilsprich was counter-attacked by the Germans from the Rabst Woods north of the Hellimer-St. Jean highway. The enemy was stopped with severe losses from combined machine gun and mortar fire and the surviving Germans fled back into the woods.

After dark the Germans returned to Fremestroff. A motorized patrol was sent there during the night and cleared the enemy out by 0800 the following morning. Altrippe was then taken and the Habst Woods were cleared.

Continuing the attack at 0800, 23 November, the 1st Battalion, 137th, encountered stiff resistance in its advance on Hilsprich. The town was well defended with tanks and infantry, and the surrounding high ground was alive with enemy dug-in positions. Six hundred yards west of the town the battalion ran into terrific fire from the Germans. With heavy tanks discovered in the town, the battalion commander requested artillery fire. The Germans threw back the battalion's first assault and only after hard fighting and severe losses were men from A and C Companies able to break into the stronghold. The main enemy forces withdrew to the east, until approximately 2130 when a coordinated attack was launched by infantry and tanks.

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Breaking into the town at both ends of the main street the enemy tanks worked toward the center, firing point blank at buildings and troops, forcing the Yanks to withdraw to St. Jean Rohrbach.

On 24 November the 1st Battalion, 134th, with tanks of the 6th Armored Division, launched a powerful coordinated counter-attack upon Hilsprich, avenging men of the 137th and recapturing the town.

The 35th, with the exception of the 134th Infantry, was now pinched out and from 27 November until the end of the month, elements of the division dropped back into areas behind the lines for rest, rehabilitation, training in pillbox assault, use of special assault equipment and organic weapons.

However, certain elements of the 35th still remained firmly in position. The 216th Field Artillery Battalion found that it had several thousand yards of range left. This was offered to the 26th Division which had relieved the Santa Fe. The offer was quickly accepted and for two more days the 216th continued to hit the enemy.

The assault on Germany itself now became imminent. Each man knew that the terrible effort of coming across the battlefields of France would soon bring the fight to German soil.

On 2 December the 35th Division relieved elements of the 6th Armored and prepared to attack on the morning of the 4th. The line of departure was almost the same location as the line the division had left on 27 November, extending along the Moderbach River from east of Foret de Puttelange to a point west of Puttelange, through the town of Remering on to Hirback, then southwest to the vicinity of Gueblange.

At 0400 on the 4th, the Santa Fe attacked forcing three river crossings in eight days: the Moderbach, Saar, and Blies Rivers. The 134th was on the left and the 320th was on the right. The objective was in the vicinity of Grundviller, Ernestviller, and Woustviller.

"What time's chow?"



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"It's ours"—T. D. and equipment enter newly gained French town

Without benefit of an artillery preparation the division jumped off. The desired element of surprise prevailed in the 134th sector and Puttelange was captured without a casualty. Seventy-five German soldiers were caught sleeping in buildings and foxholes. After being awakened the enemy fought back, but to no avail. The 134th was in to stay. By 0930 the town had been cleared completely. The 320th followed up the 134th's success by taking Diferding, Bettring and Helving.

On 5 December, 1944, the first round of artillery from the 35th Division fell on German soil. The lanyard was pulled at 1436 by Colonel Butler B. Miltonberger, Commanding Officer of the 134th. Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Belden, Division Artillery S-3 fired the second round and Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Thompson, Commanding Officer, 127th Field Artillery Battalion, fired the third round. The gun section was the 3rd section of Battery B, 127th.

At 1850 the 1st Battalion, 320th, moved from regimental reserve and seized the town of Ballering.

In the meantime, the 134th Infantry had continued on from Puttelange and by nightfall of the 4th, Guebenhouse and Ernestviller had been taken. The next day the division continued the attack, the 134th completely overrunning its objective and advancing to the west edge of Sarreguemines. The 320th advanced to the Saar River south of Sarreguemines at Siltzheim. By evening of 6 December elements of the 134th had control of the west section of Sarreguemines. Other elements of the 320th established themselves along the Saar River for a mile and a half. By noon of 6 December every inch of the west bank of the river was held by the 35th in its zone.

Here was the most formidable of all natural barriers again, a river. Here the Germans would certainly make another stand. They always had made the most of the natural advantages of a river for defense and there was every reason to believe they would

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"Jerry's basepoint"—Kappelkinger, France



"Tank table"—Baronville, France



"Charge"

"Trench warfare"—German trenchwork dug by Russian women



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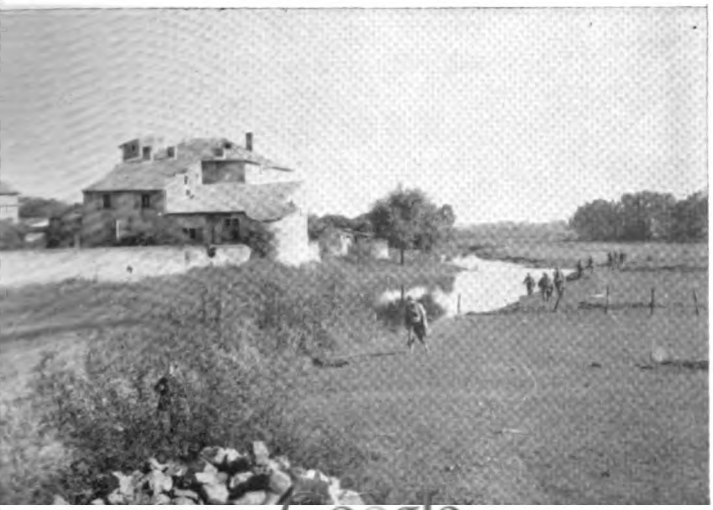
do so at the Saar. In some places the river was 200 feet wide but the 35th knew it could get across.

During the afternoon and evening of the 7th extensive reconnaissance was made for crossing sites by the 60th Engineers. On the south of Sarreguemines a railroad bridge had been destroyed by the retreating enemy, but 2nd Lieutenant John S. Parker, Company A, disclosed that with only minor repairs, it could be utilized as a bridge for foot elements of the assaulting infantry. In the division right sector suitable assault crossing sites were also found between Zetting and Wittring.

The 81st Chemical Smoke Generating Company was attached to provide necessary covering smoke for the bridging operations. A Task Force composed of two companies of the 60th Engineers and one company of the attached 133rd Engineers Combat Battalion, commanded by Captain Louis H. Johnson was given the mission assisting the assault in the left sector. Another Task Force composed of two companies of the 133rd and one company from the 60th was assigned to the right sector.

Plans were now complete for the river crossing. At 0500 on 8 December the attack began. The 134th's 1st Battalion crossed on the railroad bridge south of Sarreguemines.

"Ajoncourt home"—Infantrymen cleaning out remaining resistance





"Bailey tank trap"—Crossing a Nazi trap on a Bailey bridge

By 0655 the entire regiment had crossed, but ran into heavy resistance on the other side. At 1130 a strong counter-attack was launched against the 2nd Battalion. From 13 to 15 tanks carrying German infantry participated. This attack was completely broken in 15 minutes by what terrified prisoners later described as "your automatic artillery."

In the 320th zone the crossing had to be accomplished without delay. The 1st Battalion crossing in assault boats and the 2nd Battalion, using a partially demolished bridge, successfully crossed unobserved and reached the commanding high ground on the east bank of the river. Defending SS troops launched a counter-attack here also but were beaten off. The 1st Battalion, in the middle of the regimental zone, after crossing, pushed on as far east as Didering. The crossing of the 3rd Battalion was held up by direct fire from the east bank of the river.

Immediately after the assaulting infantry had succeeded in securing the east bank of the river, construction of necessary supporting bridges began. The 81st Chemical Smoke Generating Company occupied the high ground west of Sarreguemines and from there covered the Saar River Valley with

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"Feed sanitation"

intense clouds of smoke. This enabled the engineers to go to work. A treadway bridge was constructed over the canal at Sarreinsming, and at the same point a Bailey Bridge was begun. Another Bailey was started in Sarreguemines itself.

However, the enemy soon found out what was going on and in some instances the engineers were subjected to direct self-propelled fire. Harassing fire was continuous, but despite this the bridges at Saareinsming were completed in 48 hours. Vehicles and supplies raced across and the bridgehead was secure. The 35th had crossed another river.

On 10 December the 137th, which had been in Division reserve, was committed into the action. Crossing through the 134th bridgehead, they pressed the attack. The 2nd Battalion was to clear Sarreguemines on the east side of the river and to seize a bridgehead across the Blies River in that area.

The first obstacle of the 2nd Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel George O'Connel, was a large porcelain factory. Here the Nazis opened up with small arms fire and hand grenades. After four hours of dodging hand grenades, the last German was forced into the courtyard and killed. In this terrific battle Company F, 137th Infantry, covered itself with glory and was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

While the fighting at the porcelain factory was in progress, the 3rd Battalion was assaulting the town of Neunkirch. After artillery had dispersed enemy tanks, the town was taken against strong resistance.

On 11 December the remainder of Sarreguemines was cleared of the enemy. Nearly 1,000 allied prisoners of war, left behind by the Nazis, were liberated. The 3rd Battalion, 137th, then pushed on from Neunkirch to capture the airfield and the town of Freuenberg. The remainder of the division drove sharply to the Blies River, the last barrier to German soil.

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A G-2 report compiled by Lieutenant Colonel John T. Hoyne showed that the 35th had captured the following equipment in Sarreguemines:

Machine guns	234
Rifles	1,132
Mortars	29
Radios	5
Bazookas	112
Pistols	208
Tank Mk VI	1
Vehicles	4
Motorcycles	6
Trailer (small)	1
20mm gun	10
AT guns	2
Burp guns	134
75mm SP assault guns	2
88mm SP assault guns	6
40mm guns	2
Nebelwerfer	2
Grenades	2,150
88mm AT guns	3
Command car	1
Mines (Misc.)	18
Vehicles (Misc.)	11
Ordnance Shop (complete)	1
Power shovel	1
Volkswagons	3
Half-tracks	6

Ammunition:

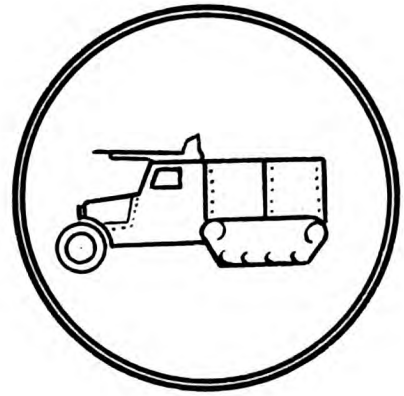
Small arms (rounds)	50,500
Artillery (rounds)	6,530
Bazooka (rounds)	1,500

"Road closed"—Entrance to bombed bridge, St. Avold, France



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Chapter IX

Into Germany.

LOOKING across the Blies River into Germany gave the men of the Santa Fe a feeling that few will ever forget. For over five months they had been fighting on French soil. And it hadn't been to their liking to destroy the homes and churches of the French people. Every devastated French village, every bridge that had been destroyed, every dead cow or horse had increased the hatred against the Germans. Now the destruction would be Germany's own. Now the division could really begin to pay back for the wanton destruction that had been inflicted on the allied countries.

Patrolling of Hitler's "sacred" land began at 0100 on 12 December when Lieutenant Clarence R. Sprague, Pfc. Richard Iles, Pfc. Charles Golumbek and Private John Friday, all from the 137th Infantry, became the first men in the division to cross into Germany.

On the night of 12 December the 60th Engineers assembled 986 feet of footbridge in the forward assembly area. Company C constructed a footbridge in the vicinity of Blies Ebersing and on the morning of the 12th, at 0500, Company C, Company B, and

"Replacements" prepare to shove off to the front



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"Your move"

"Beans" load thermos jugs with chow for buddies at the front



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"So proudly we serve"

1st and 2nd Platoons, Company D of the 134th, crossed and entered the town of Habkirchen, Germany.

These two units held this bridgehead alone for 48 hours against repeated counter-attacks by 300 SS troops with tanks. During this period casualties were high. The Company Commander and all but one officer of Company B were lost. Company C made one of the most dramatic defenses of a bridgehead in the division's history. For this heroic work Company C and the 2nd Platoon, Company D were honored with the Distinguished Unit Citation.

On the same day, the 3rd Battalion of the 320th inched forward against machine gun and tank fire to the outskirts of Bliesbruck. Resistance was fierce and even with the aid of an air strike the battalion was unable to enter the town.

During the early morning hours of darkness on 13 December the division began a large scale offensive. If a successful river crossing could be made in strength, it would place the Santa Fe at the gates of the Siegfried Line.

At 0400 the attack began. The 137th passing through the hard won and enlarged 134th bridgehead, turned to the northwest and pushed to the high ground north of Fravberg. Small gains were made.

The 320th, in the meantime, managed to get its 1st Battalion across and by nightfall had captured Hill 312, northwest of Bliesbruck. The 3rd Battalion by afternoon cleared a portion of the German-filled houses in Bliesbruck. Tank Destroyers from the 654th and tanks from Company C of the 737th Tank Battalion were also employed but little gain could be made.

The Germans were fighting ferociously, and the 35th was paying a heavy price.

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"Bioncourt buggyride"



"Double check"—T. D. men examine milling machine for booby traps

Habkirchen, Bliesbruck, Gersheim, Reinheim and Nieder-Gailbach had to be cleared house by house. The Nazis were forced out of each by hand grenades, rifle grenades, and bazookas. In six days of fierce fighting only an average of two miles were gained, but another bridgehead—this time into Germany itself—was established and secured.

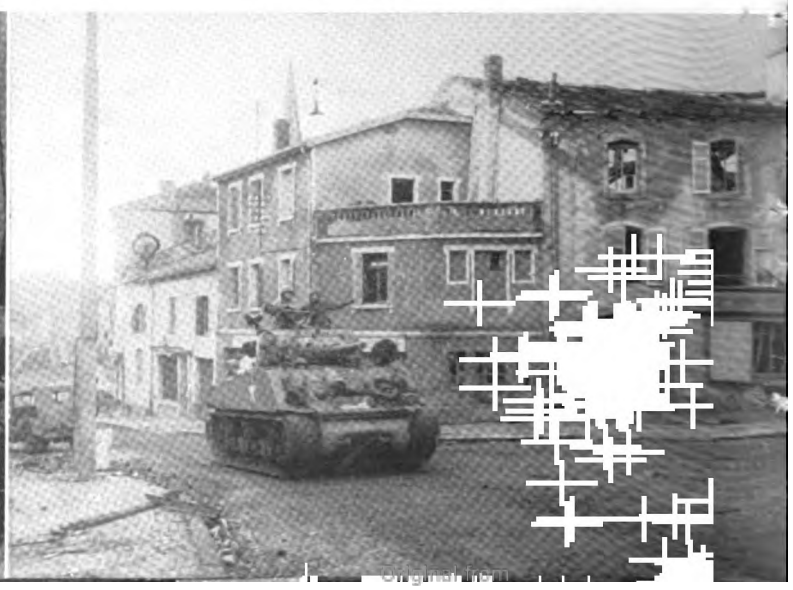
On 19 December the 35th was ordered to hold and consolidate. During the night of the 20th and 21st the division was relieved by the 44th and 87th Divisions. It then moved to Metz on the 22nd and 23rd of December and was attached to the XX Corps.

This ended a period in which the division had fought continuously for 162 days. The artillery battalions had maintained fire direction centers 24 hours a day. Staff sections had not ceased operations except to move—3,888 consecutive hours of operation. This was a record that few, if any, divisions surpassed in World War II.

"Are you sure?"—Interrogating captured German prisoner



"We outflank"—35th armor passes outskirts of Chateau Salins to outflank enemy



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Bag of this tank crew 2 MK IV and 2 MK VI tanks

Medics to the rescue again



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The following letter is another attestation to the fine achievements of the Santa Fe:

Major General Paul W. Baade
Commanding, 35th Infantry Division
APO 35, U. S. Army

My dear General Baade:

I want you to know that the 35th Infantry Division, when it transferred from the XII Corps, took with it the respect and admiration of our entire Corps.

Your record in combat has been a distinguished one on the Western Front. Beginning with your unforgettable drive from Le Mans through Chateaudun and Orleans, the 35th Division conducted itself with the greatest distinction through one brilliant success after another. Your spectacular operation against the city of Nancy, and your part in the securing and exploiting of our bridgehead across the Moselle, were forerunners of an even more difficult advance over 45 miles against most stubborn resistance by some of Germany's finest fighting forces. The manner in which you battled across Lorraine to cross the Saar and Blies Rivers in the face of bitter opposition, and finally to smash across the border into Germany, was even more remarkable when we consider the frightful conditions of weather you were forced to endure. Your gallant and determined fight against record rainfalls, floods, bitter cold and the pillboxes of the Maginot Line is in the highest traditions of the military service.

Every officer and every soldier of your Division will share your pride in the enviable standards of courage and professional skill you have set during these past bloody months. Please accept for yourself, and for all members of your command, my sincere appreciation of the heroic achievements of the 35th Infantry Division.

Very sincerely yours,

/s/ M. S. Eddy
/t/ M. S. EDDY
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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1st Ind.

HQ. 35th INF. DIV., APO 35, U. S. Army, 9 Jan. 1945

TO: Officers and men 35th Infantry Division.

The glory of the historic achievements of this Division during the past six months now belongs to the ages. It is a brilliant page in the history of the military forces of the United States. To each of you, and to our fallen comrades, I can add nothing but to express my deepest appreciation and humble pride in being your commander. Proud of our past, confident in our future, let us go forward to even greater heights as we drive on in this our greatest test.

/s/ Paul W. Baade
/t/ PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

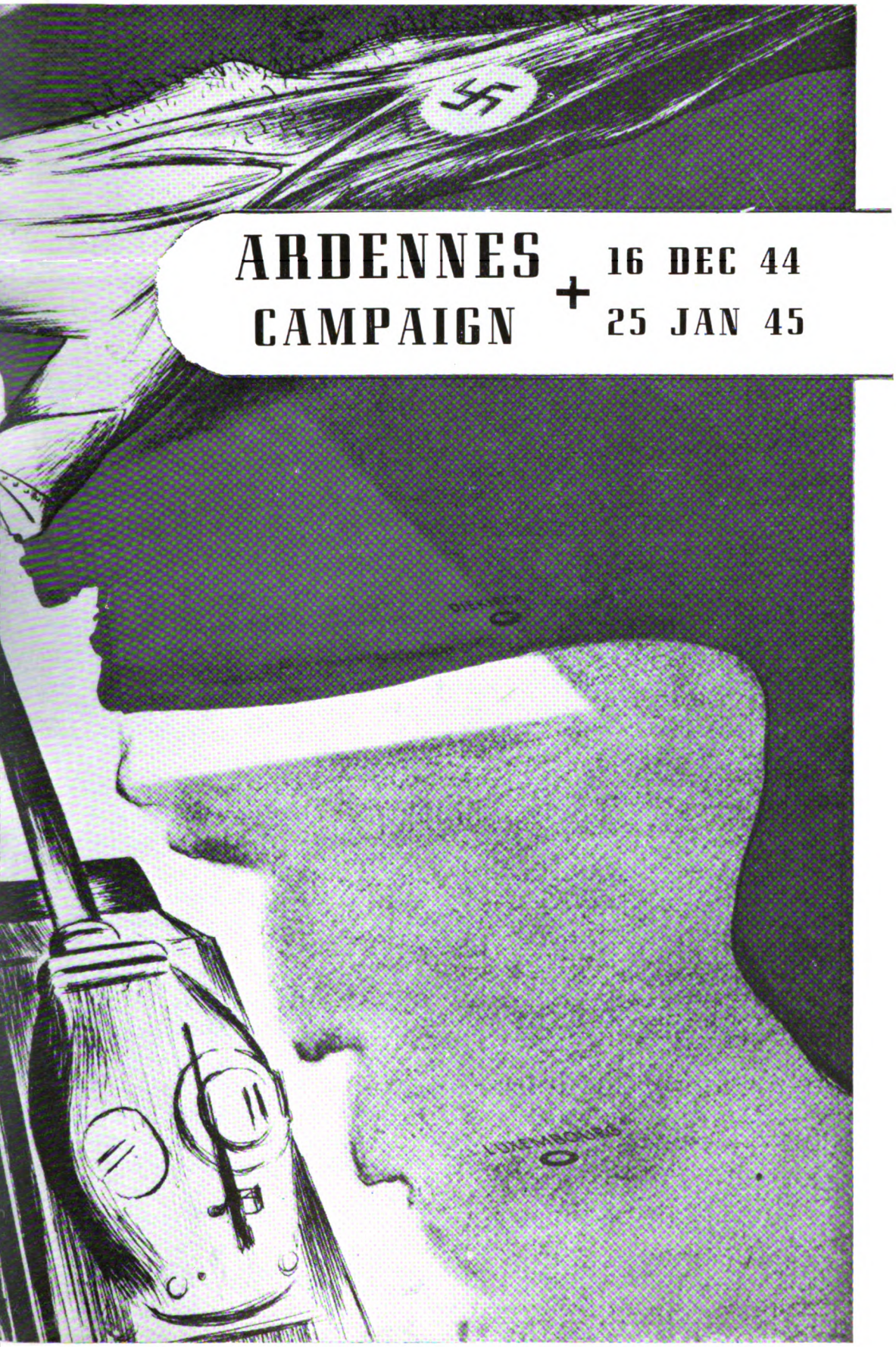
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"THE BEGINNING OF THE END"

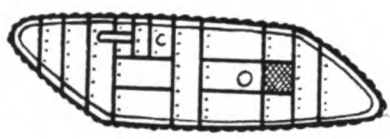
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CHAPTER X

Bastogne.

DECEMBER found the Allied Armies all along the western front pounding on the German West Wall. Disaster for the Nazis was imminent. The Boche could sell neither time nor space. Only by deception and a smashing blow could eventual defeat be delayed.

Von Rundstedt turned to his files of nefarious schemes and pulled out the "Blitzkrieg in the West" dated May, 1940. This, "the lightning attack plan," said simply "Assemble all armor and reserves in the Coblenz-Trier area, smash through the Ardennes Forest, then attack and conquer your enemies in turn." This attack in 1940 caused the Netherland Army to surrender in five days, the Belgian Army in nineteen days and completed the domination of all France in 43 days.

Now, in December of 1944, with time running out, Von Rundstedt, in desperation, chose the same Ardennes area as in 1940. Spearheaded by the Sixth SS Panzer Army, on 16 December, the smashing blow fell. Eruption and breakthrough by German armor and armored infantry destroyed or swept aside all immediate Allied resistance. The world was agasp.

Squarely astride the road network, and the key to Von Rundstedt's Blitz, was—*Bastogne!*

Christmas, the tenth day of the German Blitz, was spent by the 35th in Metz. This was the first real break the division had received since the beachhead. Everyone gorged himself on turkey and had an opportunity to relax and get some much needed rest. But it did not last. On Christmas night the order to move out was received. The German armored breakthrough had made dangerous progress through the Ardennes and the 35th was transferred from the XX to the III Corps and sent to the vicinity north of Arlon, Belgium. The entire Division had moved more than 80 miles and was in the thick of battle within 24 hours after leaving Metz.

In conjunction with the 26th Division on the right of the 35th and the 4th Armored on the left, the plan of the III Corps was to attack, advance and relieve the surrounded American troops holding the important communications center of Bastogne. Limited information was obtained from elements of the 6th Cavalry Group, but a line of departure was established for the Santa Fe generally along the Sure River.

At 0800 on 27 December, the Division attacked in snow six inches deep. The 137th moved by truck along a road in the 4th Armored sector to a point southwest of Tintange in order to cross the river in friendly territory. Considerable gains were made until the town of Surre was reached. There the 137th met bitter resistance and only after a hard struggle was it able to capture the town.

The 320th ran into considerable difficulty

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"Muddy flats, airport, Nancy"



"Anti-tank digs in"



"A rest at Tintage, Belgium"



"Pump station"—Vital water supply

"Air field protection association"

"M. P.'s direct traffic"





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"Support"—Moving into captured Tintage, Belgium



"Get closer"



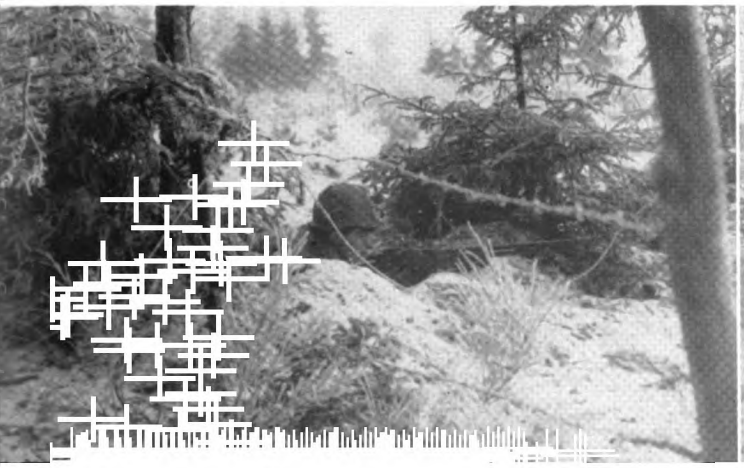
"Crucifix outpost"



"Smouldering Tintage"

"Now the wedge"

"Forward alert"





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in crossing the Sure River, but by wading in icy water waist deep, the 3rd Battalion got a company across in the afternoon. By dark the 2nd Battalion had captured the towns of Boulaide and Baaschleiden.

Next day little gain was made in any sector. The 3rd Battalion of the 137th drove to a hill southwest of Villers-la-Bonne-Eau where severe small arms, mortar, and artillery fire was encountered. The 320th took an important road junction. The 3rd Battalion of the 134th was brought up from reserve and relieved the 1st Battalion of the 318th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division.

On 29 December, the division continued to attack. The 137th made no gain. The 320th was locked in bitter battle for a farm southeast of the town of Harlange.

Then the division reserve, the 134th, was committed into the cold, bleak battle. Colonel Miltonberger attacked in column of battalions in order to give depth to his effort. The regiment fought with its usual tenacious Santa Fe spirit and soon the 1st Battalion moved into Marvie, three kilometers southeast of Bastogne, making contact with the 101st Airborne Division. This effort, coupled with that of the gallant 4th Armored, made certain that Bastogne was relieved of all encirclement.

The Germans launched a powerful counter-attack against the 134th and 137th on 30 December. Much credit for destroying the German armor around Lutrebois was due to the Santa Fe's 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 701st Tank Destroyer Battalion of the 4th Armored Division. In all they destroyed 11 tanks during this attack. The attacking forces were the 1st SS Panzer "Adolph Hitler" Division and the 167th Volksgrenadier Division. It was a brutal counter-attack and elements of Companies K and L of the 137th were cut off in Villers-la-Bonne-Eau.

The German objective in their counter-attack was to cut, at all costs, the Arlon-Bastogne Highway. All day and night the battle raged, finally with the assistance of the air corps and close proximity fuzed artillery, it was broken, and the elite 1st SS Panzer Division lay lifeless, broken and destroyed upon the field of battle.

On the last day of December, attempts to relieve the situation of K and L Companies, 137th, were in vain. They were finally given up for lost when it was learned from German prisoners that they had either been killed or captured. The Nazis had blasted holes in the walls of the houses from which the men fought and then turned flame throwers on

"The trail"—Bastogne



"Siberia in Luxembourg"—Belgium-Luxembourg border



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"Be quick"—"and take cover"







Upper—"They shall not pass"
Lower—"Near Luxembourg"

"Covering fire"—near Sainley, Belgium

"Mine hunt"



"35th Inf. advance near Surre"



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"German paratrooper"—wounded



"Harassing fire"



"Mortars at Bastogne"



"Arty. at work"—during drive to knock out Von Runstedt's push

"Moonlight and cold"—Luxembourg-Belgium border



"Dive bomber attack"



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"Fallen foe"



"Hatrack in hell"—Honville, Belgium



"Self-propelled 105 at Bastogne"



"No growls from this Tiger"

"Hands off"—Warning, around 240mm



"One Tiger tamed"



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"Panzer superman"



"Outskirts of Luxembourg"



"Dining out"



"Identity unknown"

the men inside. This was a blow that the Division vowed to avenge. The majority of the 235 men missing from the regiment that day were believed lost in this action. Their bravery and intense devotion to duty gave impetus to the Santa Fe spirit and determination to finish the war as quickly as possible.

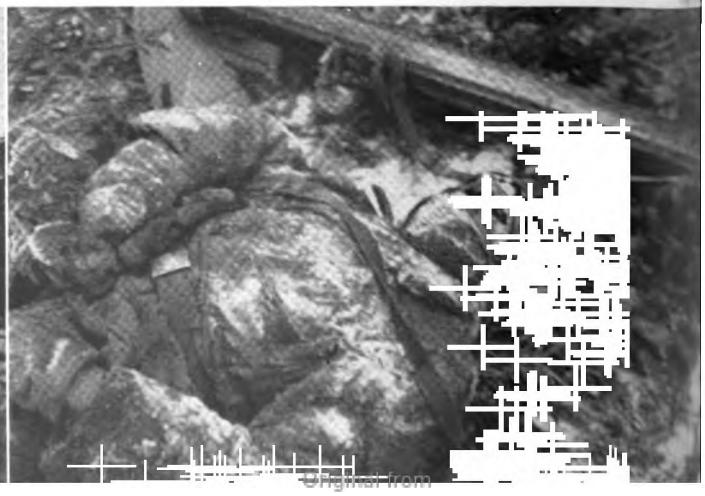
The division was attacked again and again. Neither side gave quarter. But the Santa Fe did not budge. In the opinion of many veteran 35th soldiers the Battle of the Ardennes was even more fierce than St. Lo. From 3 to 7 January, Division artillery under the command of Brigadier General T. L. Futch fired 41,385 rounds into enemy positions.

Even in zero weather and waist-deep snow

"Nazi in Ardennes"



"Panzer grenadier loses out"



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"Prisoners of the Ardennes"



"Jerry forgot these"

the Nazis fought with the utmost tenacity. The 1st SS Division committed many atrocities. Some of their soldiers were captured in complete American uniform and using American weapons and vehicles. Bottles of acid were also found on them, with instructions that the wax tops were to be broken and the contents thrown into the face of their captives.

The Germans were fighting in excellent defensive terrain with good road networks. The entire area was filled with towns and villages and every house was transformed into a miniature fortress. Every hill and every small woods had to be taken separately. The 137th fought for 13 days before it battered down the defenses of Villers-la-



"Luxembourg interrogation"

"Burial party for Hun"



"One less"



"Photographers bag"



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"Street scene"—Sainley, Belgium

Bonne-Eau. It took five days of constant assault by the 134th to capture Lutrebois. Harlange was held by the Nazis even though the 320th put extreme pressure on it.

Units identified on the 134th Infantry front alone were the 901st Regiment of the 130th Panzer Lehr Division; the 2nd Regiment of the 1st SS Panzer Division, and the 401st Artillery Brigade. Further identifications were made of the 331st Regiment, 167th Volksgrenadier Division, and the 167th Division Artillery Brigade. Roughly, four German Divisions had attacked the Santa Fe and had been beaten off.

From 27 December to 17 January, the 35th took 1,034 prisoners and killed and wounded as many more. The Santa Fe, fighting in freezing and bitter cold against a ruthless enemy, had performed admirably and the Battle of Bastogne was closed. Now the enemy's ARDENNES penetration was reduced to a defensive bulge from which the Germans could only continue to retire under pressure. Enemy equipment captured in the Bastogne engagement included:

Rifles	1,321
Pistols	116
Machine pistols	312
Machine guns	263
Bazookas	267
Mortars (80mm)	27
Mortars (50mm)	5
Mortars (120mm)	14
Grenades	1,053
AT guns (75mm)	8
Guns (88mm)	10
Wagons	18

"A touchy job"



"Cold laundry"



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Howitzer (105mm)	1
Howitzers (75mm)	2
AT mines	12
Guns (40mm)	2
Guns (20mm)	2
Nebelwefers	7
AT gun (puppchen)	1
Panzerfaust	40
Teller mines	48
Rifle grenades	75
Bayonets	12
Vehicles (Misc.)	17
Arty. carriages (horse drawn)	2
Bicycles	3
Personnel carrier	1
Motorcycle	1
Volkswagons	10
Com. and Rcn. cars	4
Trucks (1½ ton)	11
Trailers (1 ton)	4
Half-tracks	3
Tanks (all types)	16
Horses	180



"35th moves through Bastogne"

Radios	24
Telephones	35
Binoculars	12

Ammunition:

Rifle and MG	220,800 Rds.
Rocket	80 Rds.
Machine pistol	32,000 Rds.
Mortar (50mm)	4,940 Rds.
Arty. (88mm)	1,077 Rds.
Mortar (80mm)	4,200 Rds.
Mortar (120mm)	60 Rds.
Puppchen	20 Rds.
Arty.	1,027 Rds.

"Plotting a mine field"



"Litter—winter style"



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"Sign and counters'gn"



"Water supply"



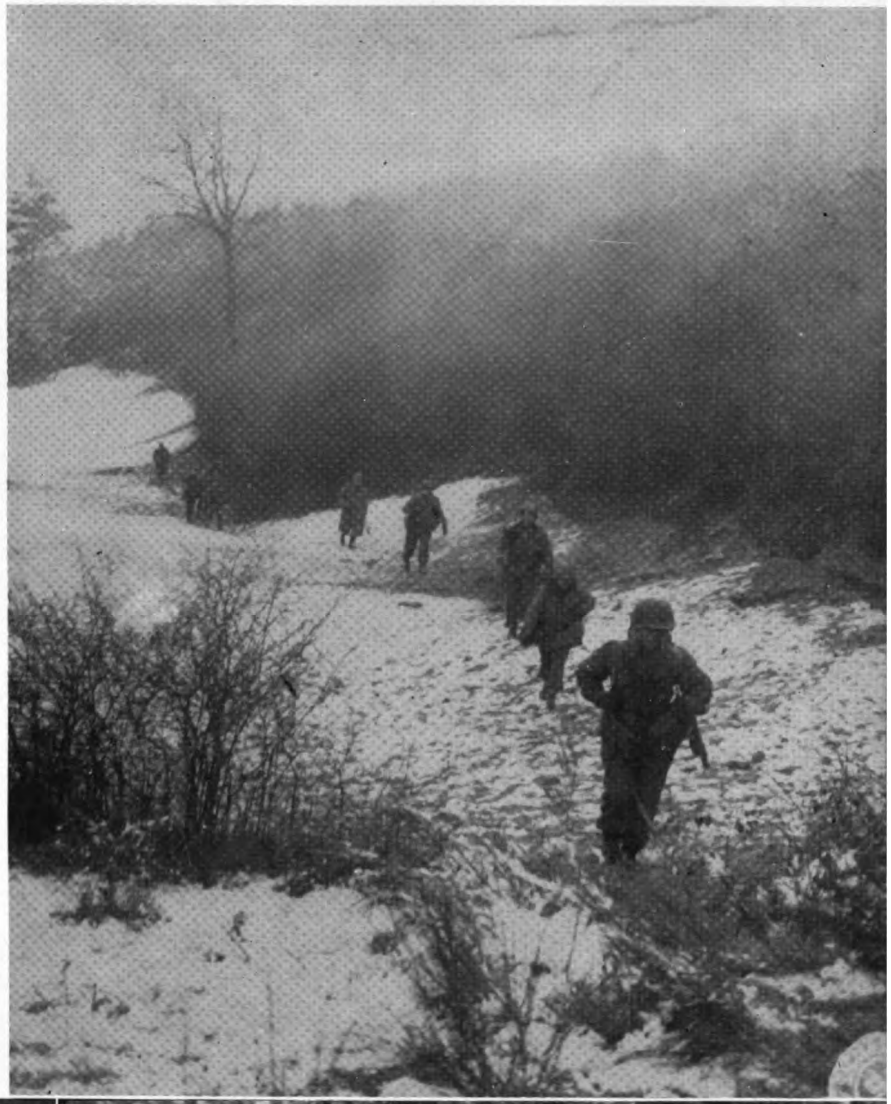


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"Captured Boche"





"35th Inf. moves near Surre"





"Front line communications"

"Anti-tank"

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"Slippery going"

"Lutremange victim"—Civilian injured in battle



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"To the front"

"They will not pass"—M. P. guards vital bridge



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Writing a letter home
"What will the censor pass?"

"Bridge guards"



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Once again the officers and enlisted men of the Santa Fe received the gratitude and commendation of their Army, Corps and Division Commanders:

HEADQUARTERS III CORPS
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
APO 303, U. S. Army

200.6 GNNCG 25 January 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division, APO 35, U. S. Army.

1. The following letter from the Army Commander is quoted to all III Corps units which participated in the relief of Bastogne:

HEADQUARTERS
THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL
APO 403

20 January 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO: Commanding General, Officers and Men of the III Corps, APO 303, U. S. Army.

"1. The speed with which the III Corps assembled, and the energy, skill and persistency with which it pressed its attack for the relief of BASTOGNE, constitute a very noteworthy feat of arms.

"2. You and the Officers and men of your Command are hereby highly commended for a superior performance.

"3. You will apprize all units concerned for the contents of this letter.

/s/ G. S. Patton, Jr.
/t/ G. S. PATTON, JR.
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding."

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1. The Corps Commander is gratified to transmit the Army Commander's commendation to the units of Corps troops and divisions participating in the relief of BASTOGNE. The uncertainty of the enemy situation, the stubborn enemy resistance, the disregard for losses and the team work which all units displayed in gaining the goal of relieving BASTOGNE were the contributing factors that made the operation such an outstanding victory, and will be highly valued in the history of each unit.

2. The Corps Commander adds his commendation for the performance of this task well done.

3. The contents of this letter will be made known to all officers and enlisted men of your organization at the earliest practicable time.

/s/ John Millikin
/t/ JOHN MILLIKIN
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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330.13 1st Ind. PWB/mla

HQ. 35th INF. DIV., APO 35, U. S. Army, 9 Feb. 45

TO: Unit Commanders, 35th Infantry Division.

1. From St. Lo to BASTOGNE the path of this Division is well marked by monuments to Victory. Your performance has been magnificent.

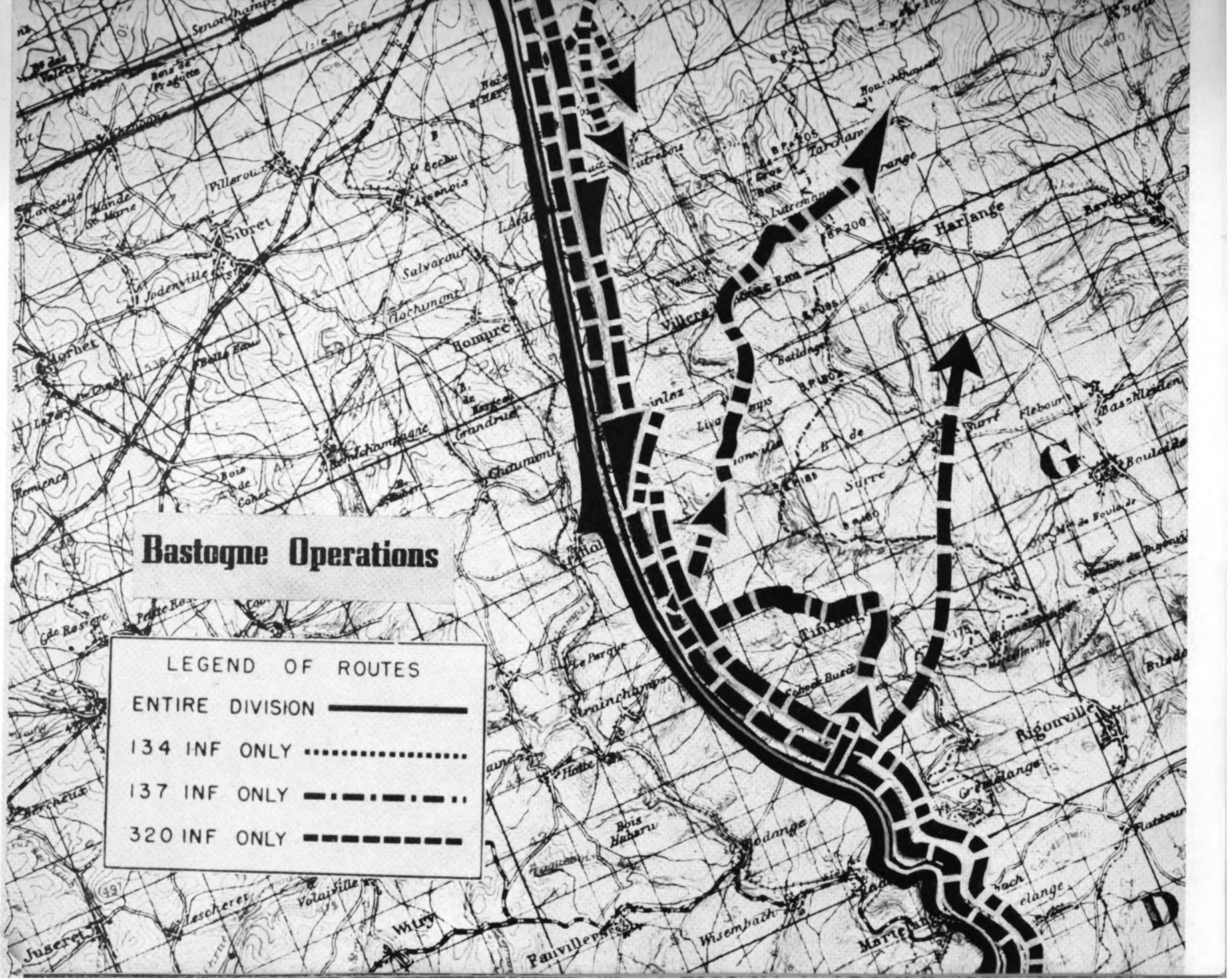
2. I desire that the above commendation be read to all of your officers and enlisted men. To it I add my congratulations for this splendid achievement.

/s/ Paul W. Baade
/t/ PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

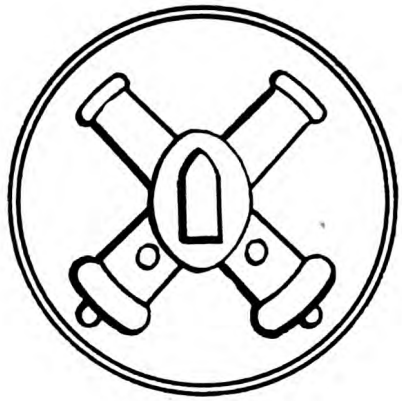
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Chapter XI

South to the Vosge Mountains.

THE Santa Fe (less Combat Team 134), moved to Metz on 18 and 19 January and remained there until the 23rd. Then it shifted quickly to the vicinity of Bidestroff, Wingen sur Moder, Soucht and Chateau-Voue, France, where it joined the XV Corps of the Seventh Army.

In this snowbound sector the Nazis threatened an attack through the Domaniale Forest. The 35th relieved elements of the 45th and 100th Divisions and took up front line positions approximately 25 miles southeast of Sarreguemines, the city through which the Santa Fe had broken into Germany in mid-December. In these positions, the 35th was flanked by the 45th Division on the right and the 100th Division on the left.

Three main lines of defense were planned so that the division could defend each line of resistance with only a small holding force in the event of a withdrawal. An attacking division, the 35th was nevertheless as well prepared for defense as it had always been for offense. The 60th Engineer Battalion maintained a 24-hour ice patrol each day, hauling and spreading traction material on all important roads in the sector. The battalion snow-plow cleared the air strip near

"Sarrguemines"



"Repair crew"



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"The Boche destroy"

"Moving a Bailey bridge"



"Holding a lake back"



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"Bridge out"

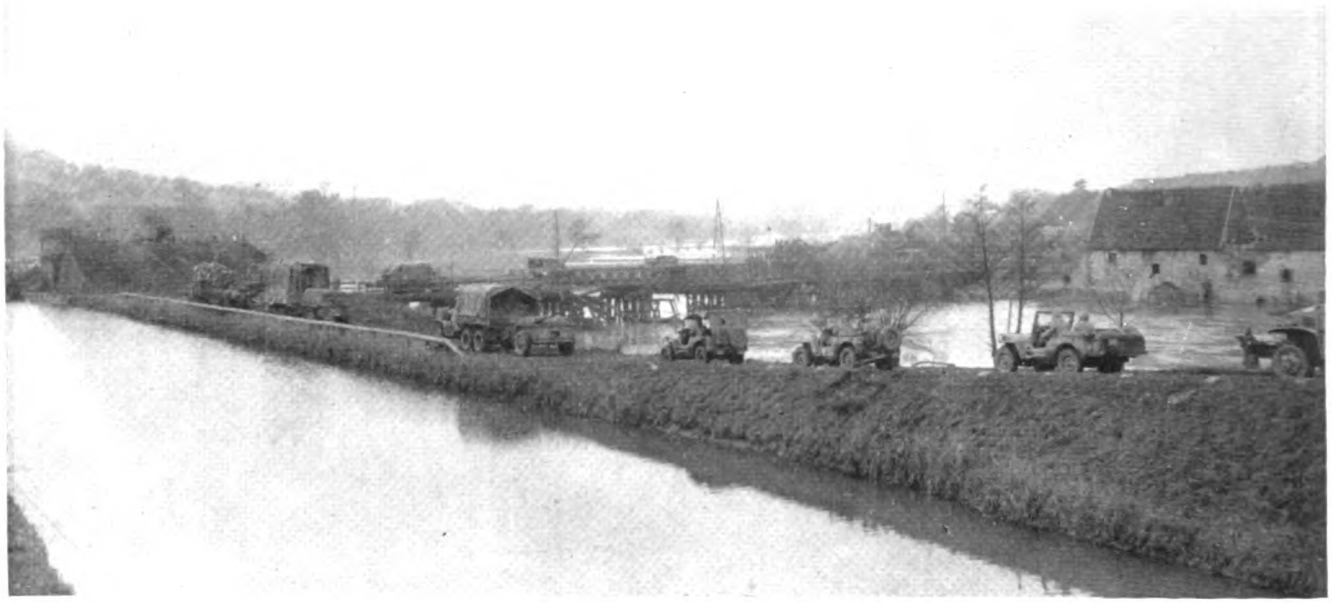


"Road repair"

"Engineers span the Saar"



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"Jeep road"—Sarrguemines

"Any questions?"



Struth, installed anti-tank mined road blocks and prepared 22 bridges for demolition. Extensive surveys were made to determine the amount of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, concertina wire, pickets and warning devices required to make positions as impregnable as possible.

Supported by the 654th and 807th Tank Destroyer Battalions, the 35th artillery fired numerous harassing and interdiction missions. In the five-day period, from the 24th to the 29th, over 2,600 rounds were fired. Within definite ammunition allowances, it was possible for the big guns to play their role in psychological warfare, too. On the 28 January the 216th Field Artillery Battalion fired 40 rounds of propaganda at 15 different points in the 320th sector.

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Compared with the "Battle of the Bulge," the southern sector was very quiet. But the 137th and 320th were both active in reconnaissance patrols. These infiltrations through enemy lines determined locations of automatic weapons, fortifications, wire entanglements, minefields, booby-trapped areas, fields of fire through woods, roadblocks and observation posts. Regular motorized patrols were also conducted in the forward areas to detect any enemy infiltration.

Snow fell thickly and troops worked continuously to improve their positions and fight the cold.

* * * * *

During this period Combat Team 134th remained in the Bastogne area under the 6th Armored Control, continuing its eastward advance to clear the Nazis from the shrinking Bulge. The 3rd Battalion occupied Basbellain, advanced six kilometers and outposted to the northeast.

Von Rundstedt was still resisting stubbornly and the enemy poured heavy concentrations of artillery into the regimental zone. Identifications were made of the 1130th Regiment, 560th Volksgrenadier Division, and the 694th and 695th Regiments of the 340th Volksgrenadier Division.

Attached to Combat Command A, 6th Armored, the 1st Battalion, 134th, drove ahead on 24 January in snow and high wind until it reached the woods south of Wilwerdange. There it met heavy artillery and small arms fire and had to fight hard to secure the west portion of the woods. Next day the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were relieved by the 17th Airborne Division and assembled near Hachiville. On the 26th, the 1st Battalion was attached to Combat Command B and attacked at 0600 with the armor to take the town of Wieswampach and the area to the north and east.



"Preparations"—Troops prepare 105mm shell for coming barrage

Reaching the edge of a wooded area past Wieswampach, the 1st Battalion was halted by mortar and small arms fire. The woods were studded with enemy anti-tank guns which prevented supporting tanks from advancing with foot troops. The unit being temporarily pinned down, renewed the attack the next morning and took the town. Then the 2nd Battalion relieved elements of the 359th Infantry in the vicinity of Heinerschied. All units of the regiment then consolidated their positions and sent out patrols to the German border along the Our River.

On the 27th, the 1st Battalion (still with Combat Command B), relieved the 1st Battalion of the 329th Infantry shortly after the seizure of Wieswampach. The 2nd Bat-

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"35th moving up"

talion went into reserve at Hupperdange and Grindhausen after relief by the 3rd Battalion. Forward positions reported artillery coming in from the Siegfried Line.

Early on the morning of 29 January, Company I (reinforced) attacked against light small arms resistance and took Kalborn without suffering a casualty. Next day, all units sent patrols across the Our River and continued active patrol work through the end of the month.

In the late afternoon of 31 January all units of Combat Team 134 relieved and prepared to rejoin the division which had begun a move by rail and motor to the Ninth Army sector in Holland on 30 January. Organic vehicles were moved on highways, foot troops and other elements traveled by rail.

The 35th's 292-mile trip from the Seventh to the Ninth Army sector was one of the longest infantry moves of the war. In the month of January alone the Santa Fe had traversed a total of approximately 450 miles.

Motor elements arrived in the vicinity of Sittard, Holland, where the division was assigned to the XVI Corps, on 31 January and rail elements on 1 and 2 February. General Simpson's Ninth Army was ready for concerted action and the 35th was expected to add veteran punch and tenacity to the fresh and eager Ninth. The Santa Fe was especially pleased in being assigned to an Army commanded by one of its former division Commanders.

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"35th Inf. advances"



"Gun crew"

"Mine hunt"

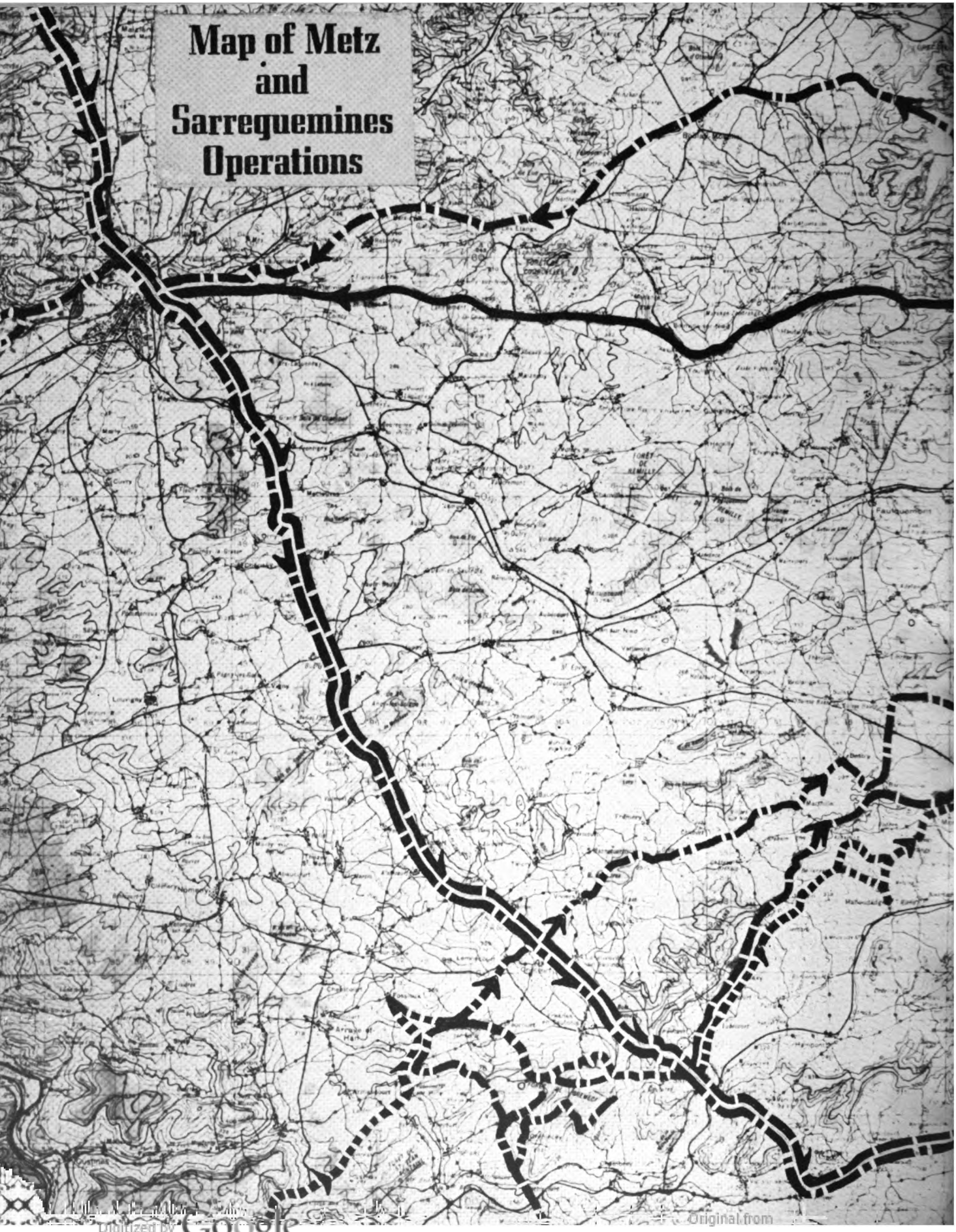


"House to house"

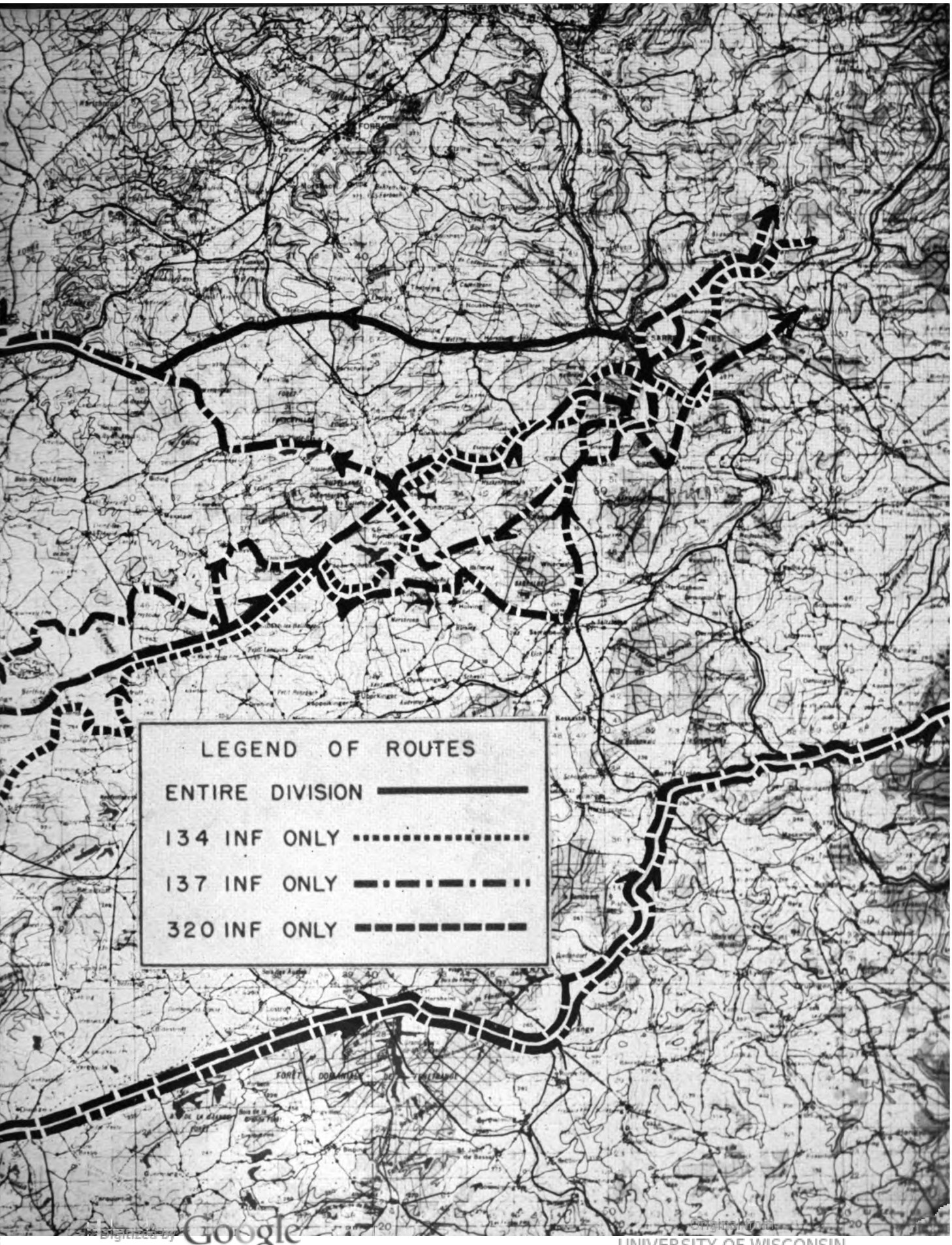


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Chapter XII

To the Rhine River

Troops of the 35th Inf. Div., Ninth U. S. Army, move through Venlo, Holland



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EARLY in February, the 35th Division relieved the 52nd British Infantry Division along a line just short of the Roer River in Germany. Plans were drawn for the Division to cross the Roer on 10 February, but D-Day for the attack was postponed pending probable demolition of the Schormel dams across the Roer River near Schmidt, Germany.

On 11 February the retreating enemy opened the dam outlets of the two largest dams, loosing 160 million cubic feet of water down the Roer River Valley. The river rose several feet overnight, inundating the surrounding countryside. There was also an unusual amount of rain in the Ninth Army sector and engineers worked hard to maintain road nets.

As soon as the river receded to normal level the original plan — "Operation Grenade" — would go into effect. The 60th Engineers assembled Bailey Bridges, heavy ponton equipment, floating treadways, several miles of road base, more than 50 tons of explosives (for destruction of the Siegfried Line), and assault boats at Geilenkirchen. This was a centrally located point from where equipment could be transported to any crucial spot on the river in a minimum of time.

To prepare thoroughly for the attack, selected infantrymen attended assault schools and engineer troops attended special schools on enemy mines and booby traps.

"Those lines must be up"



"T. D.'s chase the Hun"



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"Combat patrol"

On 23 February the Ninth Army launched its drive across the Roer. The 320th jumped off at 0330, crossed the Wurm River on improvised foot bridges and moved 1500 yards in three hours to the west bank of the Roer. Achieving its objective, the regiment sat tight.

The 134th first sent strong patrols into Hilfarth, located on the west bank of the Roer River. Then, at 2200 on the night of 25 February, the 1st Battalion stormed Hilfarth in force and cleared the town completely by the next morning. Passing through Hilfarth the 134th had captured intact a stone bridge crossing the river to the east of the city. The bridge had been denied to the enemy by the 161st Field Artillery's skillful use of artillery interdiction fire for several days. Hundreds of shells, fired at the rate of one per minute, kept the enemy away from the approaches and left the bridge virtually undamaged when foot troops later dashed across. Then two enlisted men from Company A, 60th Engineers, T/5 James Stanislau, Lynbrook, N. Y., and Pvt. Harold Wright, Jersey City, N. J., slipped through enemy automatic fire, cut demolition wires on the bridge, removed the charges and dropped them harmlessly in the river.

In addition to keeping the Hilfarth bridge under continuous fire, 35th artillery fired smoke missions on a feint bridgehead area in order to confuse the enemy. It also hit likely enemy observation posts and smashed nine enemy batteries.

On the right flank of the 134th, the 137th pushed its entire regiment, plus tank destroyers and tanks, across the river, using a bridge in the 84th Division zone. It marched to the vicinity of Doveren and attacked from there to the northeast.

Between 26 and 27 February, fighting within the Siegfried Line, the division captured 23 towns, routed the Nazis out of cellar strong-holds and surged forward against moderate resistance. Santa Fe doughboys and tankers of the 784th Tank Battalion teamed to drive the Germans out of strong positions in wooded areas and towns on the road to the Rhine.

As the 35th's drive gained impetus, Task Force Byrne, under the command of Colonel

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"Approaching the task"

Bernard A. Byrne, Commanding Officer of the 320th, was formed on 28 February. Its first mission was to advance to the Dutch city of Venlo near the German border about 20 miles due north and beyond the Ninth Army's zone. The force was motorized and consisted of the following units: 320th Infantry, 216th Field Artillery, 275th Field Artillery, 784th Tank Battalion (less Company A), Company C, 654 Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company C, 60th Engineer Battalion and Company C, 110th Medical Battalion.

On 1 March, doughboys of the 320th's 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph D. Alexander, Chicago, Illinois, mounted tanks to spearhead Task Force Byrne and dashed past the Roer's Siegfried defenses. Two assault engineer soldiers were attached to each infantry platoon, and, while riflemen covered them with small arms fire, the engineers moved up and planted demolition charges near the entrances of all pillboxes encountered. The 35th's Reconnaissance Troop furnished left flank protection and captured Herkenbosch and Roermond.

Task Force Byrne roared through town after town. As they approached Venlo,

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"Underground haven"



"A. A. on the watch"



"On to Puttelange"

"Congratulations"—Capt. D. L. Benton presented with the Silver Star



"Barnyard" artillery



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35th Div. prepares to attack Lindfort, Germany



35th Div. crosses the Meuse River near Obbricht, Holland





35th Div. along banks of Maas River in Venlo, Holland



British and American infantrymen meet

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35th Div. moves up to attack Lindfort, Germany



35th Div. cross the Meuse River near Obbricht, Holland







German prisoners march into Venlo, Holland

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General Baade advised Corps that Venlo itself could be taken. General Anderson, XVI Corps Commander replied, "Take it!" On 2 March the Yanks were cheered by thousands of liberated Hollanders wearing orange colors of freedom. The force then wheeled eastward, conquered Straelen and a score of other German towns, capturing hundreds of prisoners by driving almost 50 miles in three days. The climax was a swift night assault on Sevelen where the troops seized stacks of Nazi propaganda leaflets addressed to the 35th. The leaflets warned that the Roer Valley defenses were impregnable!

When Task Force Byrne turned east to knife a quick passage through enemy defenses, the 134th's 1st Battalion continued north in order to advance and occupy Geldern and to secure the vital road-net just west of the city. Company C 134th, here made first contact with the British Forces driving down from the north at 1350 on 3 March in a dramatic and historical meeting.

The 35th then unleashed more power to take large groups of prisoners and gather up cities such as Lintfort which housed one of the largest coal mines in Germany.

On 25 February, Colonel Butler B. Miltonberger, Commanding Officer of the 134th, was promoted to Brigadier General and appointed Assistant Division Commander of the 35th, turning over command of the 134th to Lieutenant Colonel Alford C. Boatsman of the 1st Battalion, 134th Infantry. General Miltonberger replaced Brigadier General Sebree who joined the 28th Division.

By 6 March, the 137th (Task Force Murray), drove through Rheinberg as far north as the south edge of Ossenburg where they consolidated their position following a severe battle. According to on-the-spot observers, the bitterest battle west of the Rhine took place north of Rheinberg, which became known as "88 Alley."

Wedged between the Ninth Army and British and Canadian forces, the Nazi bridgehead on the west side of the Rhine opposite Wesel was now squashed into a tight fist holding on to the flat land past Ossenberg. In this pocket, eight units of Hitler's best troops were identified, including elements of three paratroop divisions. Unable to withdraw heavy guns and ammunition across the Rhine, the Germans were throwing it all in a desperate effort to hold off the Santa Fe.

Battling against fanatical resistance, the 3rd Battalion of the 137th pressed in on Ossenberg and won a hard-fought battle in the huge Solvay Works on the outskirts of the city. On 8 March the 2nd Battalion occupied all of Ossenberg and other elements of the regiment swept through between the city and the Rhine River. This cut off the important Nazi escape route from a ferry crossing point near Ossenberg.

On the night of 9 March, after 3 days of advancing against stiff resistance from Kamp through Millingen and Huck, Task Force Byrne took the town of Drupt in a swift attack preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment. Drupt protected the center of the road net of the Nazi bridgehead at Wesel.

The 134th then passed through Task Force Byrne and stabbed swiftly forward toward the two remaining bridges over the Rhine in the Ninth Army sector. The 35th plan was to capture intact the Wesel Bridge. But on 10 March, the Nazis pulled their shattered remnants back to the east bank and blew the two magnificent bridges just before the 134th reached them. Farther south, the 137th captured the town of Wallach.

The Santa Fe was on the Rhine! The last Nazi troops facing the division had been driven across the river in the Ninth Army zone by the attacking Santa Fe, leaving 4,775 prisoners. Operation "Grenade" was successfully completed and the 35th looked across the Rhine to its next objective, the Ruhr.

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"Patrol to Unterbrach"

"Maginot shelter"—near St. Jean Rohrbach



"Bazooka wins"—Knocked out German tank



"Direct hit"



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"Sky sentries on the banks of the Saar River"



"More prisoners of the 35th Inf."

"Good bye"—Planes take off



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"Civilian salvage"



"The enemy has gone"—German artillery piece

"Track"—Guarding newly erected Saar River bridge



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"Motormen"—shown in motor pool office



"Mail call"—Mail for Medics

"500 pounds of fury"—Crater made by action bomb



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"Motormen"—shown in motor pool office



"Mail call"—Mail for Medics

"500 pounds of fury"—Crater made by action bomb



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HEADQUARTERS NINTH U. S. ARMY

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APO 339, U. S. Army

330.13 (GNMCS) 15 March 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.

THRU: Commanding General, XVI Corps, APO 197, U. S. Army.

TO: Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division, APO 35, U. S. Army.

1. Assignment of the 35th Infantry Division to Ninth Army a few weeks ago afforded me a feeling of particular gratification. I am frank to confess that this feeling is prompted in part by the fact of my previous association as one-time Commander of the organization. Aside from this warm personal interest in the division, I am also mindful of the splendid achievements of the division since the early days of the invasion.

2. With reference to the participation of the division in Operation "Grenade" just concluded, I feel that the performance of your organization was one of the outstanding features of the entire operation and undoubtedly contributed greatly to the speedy reduction of the northern portion of the Army zone of advance. The skill with which the division made its crossing of the Roer River and the speed and power with which it raced up the Army left flank, progressing up to twelve miles a day, was most impressive. Significant also was the staying power evidenced by the division when, after extended operations in the advance, it smashed German resistance in the critical area west of Wesel. It is one of the few of the participating divisions which fought in the operation from H-hour of D-day to the completion of the action on 12 March.

3. It is unnecessary for me to point out that the performance of the 35th Infantry Division in Operation "Grenade" constitutes another glowing chapter in the splendid record achieved by the unit in this theater of operations. Please express to every officer and man of your organization my most sincere appreciation for their individual contribution toward the accomplishment of a difficult mission in a superb manner.

/s/ W. H. Simpson
/t/ W. H. SIMPSON
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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AG 330.13 GNMTA 1st Ind.
(15 March 45)
HEADQUARTERS XVI CORPS, APO 197, U. S. Army, 21 March 45
TO: Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division, APO 35, U. S. Army.

1. The outstanding performance of your Division in the "Grenade" operation has been thoroughly covered in the Army Commander's letter of commendation.

2. May I add my sincere and heartfelt thanks for the contribution of your splendid Division to the successful accomplishment of the mission of this Corps in the operations that have recently been successfully completed.

3. I am greatly pleased to forward the Army Commander's commendation, in which I concur wholeheartedly.

/s/ John B. Anderson
/t/ JOHN B. ANDERSON
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

AG 330.13 2nd Ind. PWB/emn
(15 March 45)
HEADQUARTERS 35th INFANTRY DIVISION, APO 35, U. S. Army, 24 March 45

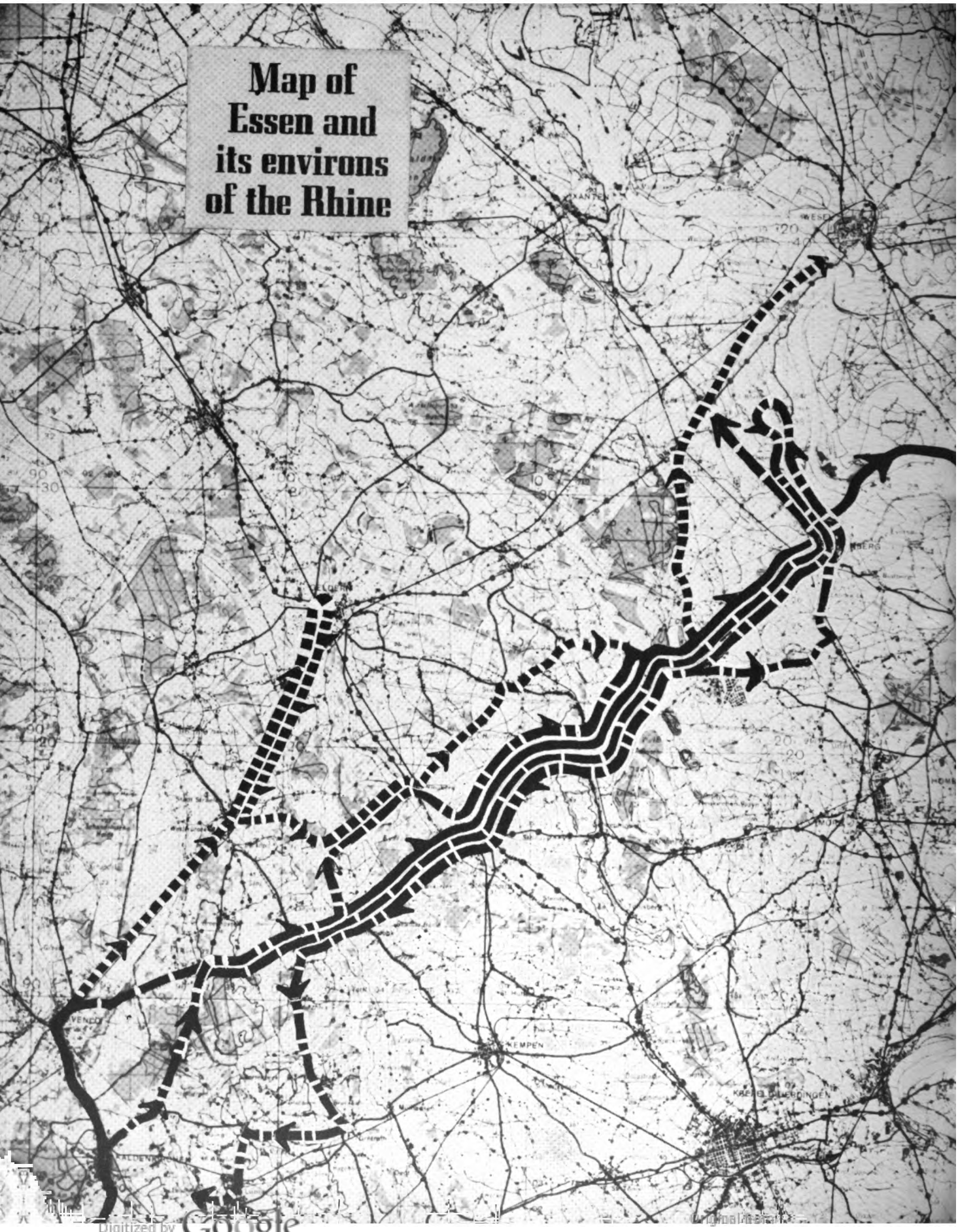
TO: The Officers and Enlisted Men of the 35th Infantry Division.

It is with distinct pride that I again transmit a letter of commendation to you. Your glorious achievements, challenging as they are, have been surpassed each time you enter a new phase of combat. With the praise of the Army and Corps Commanders ringing in our ears, let us cross the Rhine and enter the heart of Germany with even more determined dash and vigor to FINAL VICTORY.

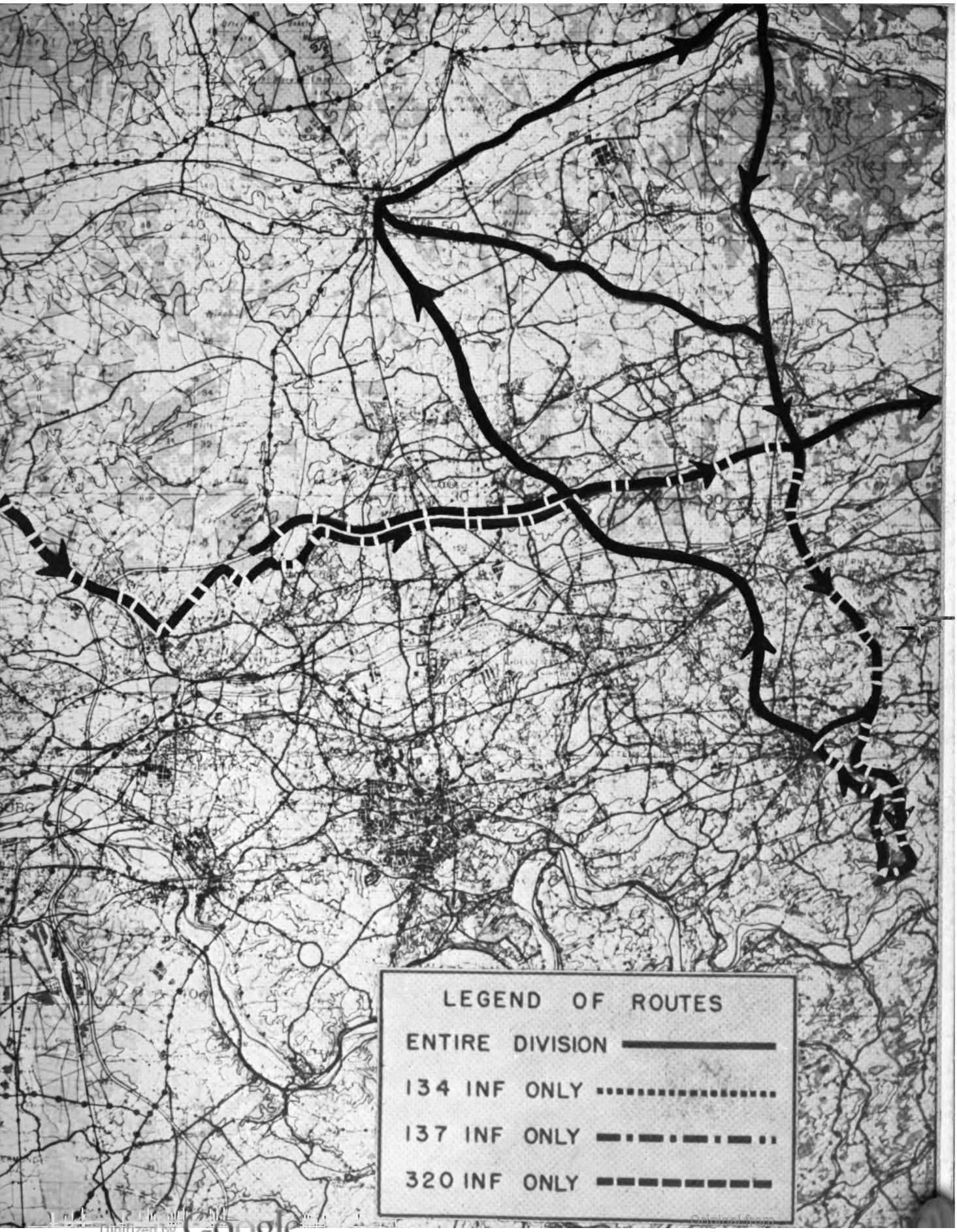
Godspeed to each of you!

/s/ Paul W. Baade
/t/ PAUL W. BAADE
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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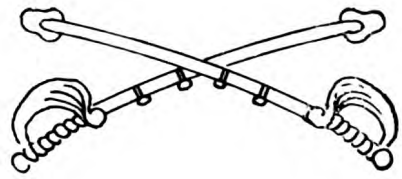
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CENTRAL EUROPE
CAMPAIGN
2 APRIL 45—9 MAY 45

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Chapter XIII

Over the Rhine and into the Ruhr.

THE Rhine River cut a wide, sullen barrier between the 35th and the Ruhr. To cross Germany's greatest waterway would culminate a long list of successes for the "River-Crossing 35th."

On 24 March under devastating concentrated allied artillery fire, the 30th and 79th Infantry Divisions crossed the river against moderate resistance, the former aided by supporting fire from 35th Division artillery.

On 25 March, Task Force Miltonberger was formed. It consisted of Combat Team 134th, 127th Field Artillery; Company A, 60th Engineer Battalion; Company A, 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and Company A of the 784th Tank Battalion. The force closed into an area in the vicinity of Rheinberg and passed to control of the 79th Division. The 137th and 320th patrolled their areas and made plans to move the next day.

During the great allied air attack on the night of 25 and 26 March, Task Force Miltonberger crossed the Rhine and launched an attack at 0800 on the 26th. This attack gained two and one-half miles in only four hours to take its objective. At 1800 that evening the task force was relieved from attachment to the 79th Division and reverted to 35th control.

Meanwhile, the 137th and 320th crossed the Rhine on "Doughfoot Bridge" east of Rheinberg followed by the 216th and 219th Field Artillery Battalions. The Division Command Post then moved to Dinslaken, east of the Rhine, and preparations were made to increase the tempo of attack.

With the 320th in division reserve, the 134th, 137th and attached tanks and tank destroyers pushed into the Ruhr. At first, only scattered resistance was encountered but later

Medics take care of wounded



"Hands off"—Warning, around 240mm



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this increased and enemy small arms, mortar, artillery and self-propelled fire fell in the ranks of the Santa Fe. The division's own artillery followed up the advancing attack closely, firing numerous missions on enemy mortars, self-propelled guns, machine gun positions and enemy assembly areas. By the end of the day, 27 March, the 35th had gained approximately three and one-half miles through wooded terrain.

On 28 March, the 320th joined in the attack and met heavy fire as it fought through woods to reach the Autobahn Highway. By 1800, leading elements of the regiment captured part of the Autobahn, while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 134th crossed the railroad tracks north of the highway. The 137th met very heavy opposition in the woods in their zone, but continued to advance slowly.

Next day the 134th secured positions along the railroad west of the town of Gladbeck against moderate mortar and artillery fire. That afternoon the 2nd and 3rd Battalions seized the town. In the Gladbeck suburb of Rentfort, 134th Infantrymen that night found more than 6,500 German civilians in the shafts of a coal mine. The civilians had huddled in the mine for five days in fear of allied bombings.

The 137th and 320th made progress against heavy resistance and managed to advance one and one-half miles on the 29th.

On 30 March, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 134th, advanced into the city of Buer despite heavy small arms and direct fire, while the 3rd Battalion of the regiment overran five enemy direct-fire anti-aircraft guns west of the city. The 137th cleared the town of Eigen and leading elements made an advance of four meters for the day. The division was now fighting in a very thickly-settled zone best described as "Pittsburgh-like terrain." The 320th's advance was especially hampered by intense fire from buildings and



"Bn. C. P."—Germany, Central Europe

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factories. Advancing steadily the regiment completely cleaned the enemy from the city of Bottrop by dark of the 30th.

Near Bottrop, all around teamwork between units of the 137th and supporting organizations cut the Autobahn by fighting through a blocked portion thus depriving the Nazis of the use of a two mile stretch of the vital highway. The plan and execution was rather unique.

Calling for smoke from artillery and throwing smoke shells from his own mortars, Lieutenant Colonel Albert Butler ordered K and L Companies of the 137th to feint an attack by increasing fire against the enemy. Then he called on the engineers to remove the cement slabs blocking the Autobahn.

T/5 James A. Williams, Albany, New York, of the 60th Engineers, moved his bulldozer up while 12 Company I riflemen went through the debris to the other side of the Autobahn to cover removal of the block. Working seven minutes behind a smokescreen and under enemy fire, Williams shoved the slabs away and Company I, followed by Company G, pushed through with elements of the 784th Tank Battalion.

Fire from three sides met the Yanks as they moved from the Autobahn toward Bottrop, a city with a prewar population of 87,000. Returning the fire as they moved forward, infantrymen and tanks forced the Nazis to withdraw to the outskirts of the city. The Germans on the flanks were forced to abandon positions along a two mile stretch of the Autobahn.

Pursuing the Nazi through unfamiliar streets, Company I, 137th, made contact with the enemy at the Rheinbaden Factory. Here a fire fight again took place, the Yanks moving through the plant and shooting everything that moved. The Germans pulled out after a two-hour fight and the huge works fell into the hands of the 35th.

Driving south toward the Emscher and Rhein-Herne Canals, advancing elements of the 134th encountered small arms, artillery and direct fire on 31 March, but the 2nd Battalion cleared Backum and Stucken-Busch, while the 1st Battalion drove the enemy from Buer-Resse and mopped up the north portion of Herten. The 137th also met moderate opposition, but captured Buer-Erie.

Against heavy small arms and machine gun fire, the 2nd Battalion of the 320th then crossed the Emscher Canal and assaulted the factory area. The 1st and 3rd Battalions also attacked and reached the Emscher. The regiment took Karn Ap and Horst, as Company F engaged in a fierce fight for the Prosper Coal Mine along the Emscher. An estimated 100 Germans were emplaced in a huge slag pile, in mine shafts and buildings, while a reported eight to ten thousand civilians—Germans and foreign workers—were kept below in the tunnels by armed guards. Other 2nd Battalion troops on the flanks also encountered last-ditch opposition from heavily armed Germans in houses and buildings.

"We threw everything at that mine. Cannon Company alone fired 950 rounds," declared Captain John Roberts, Company F's Commander. "But after a barrage the Nazis would still be there firing."

Sgt. William Chambers said the mortars fired 500 rounds and Sgt. Loren McKinney and Thomas Bendig, manning two .30 calibre machine guns, fired 12,500 rounds. 2nd Lieutenant Vivian Palmore led a platoon of infantrymen who cleared the mine buildings after a nine-man patrol led by S/Sgt. Glen Metcalf crossed the Emscher over a railroad bridge under the protection of a smoke screen with machine gun cover.

On 1 April, against considerable small arms, mortar and artillery fire, the 134th cleared both Hochlar and Recklinghausen before noon and later mopped up all of Herten and Suderwich. The 137th also met

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"Photographers bag"—Prisoners bagged by photo section

"Jerry 75 and British Bren carrier"



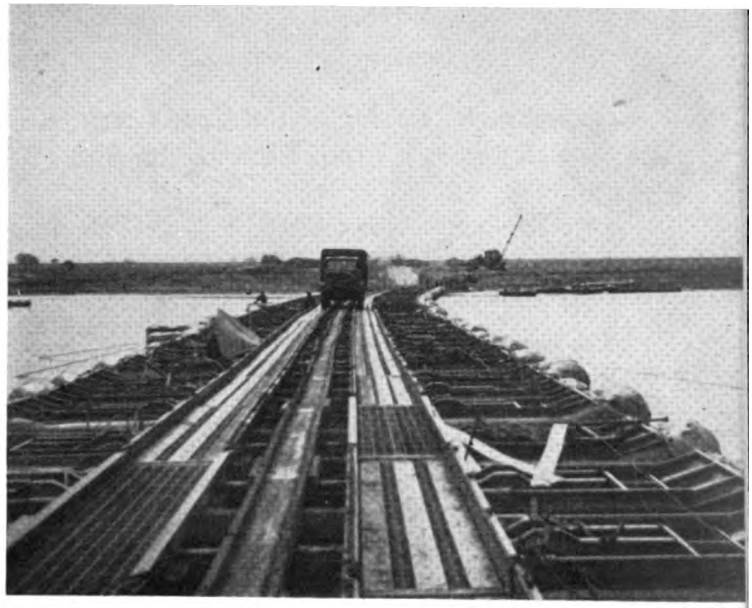
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heavy artillery, self-propelled and mortar fire, but broke up all organized resistance in Recklinghausen-Sud and advanced as far as the Rhein-Herne Canal. The 320th also pushed ahead in its zone just north of the canal. Division artillery fired on towns, factory areas and Nazi strongpoints and hit a moving train, setting it on fire. Some batteries were firing within mortar range, using charge No. 1 for the first time since the 35th landed in France.

For the next week the regiments held and improved their positions along the Herne Canal. On the 6th, the 320th was attached to the 75th Division which was aiming at Dortmund.

On the morning of 9 April, both the 134th and 137th secured bridgeheads over the canal against fairly heavy resistance but by evening, patrols of the 134th's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon had entered Gelsenkirchen after a gain of three kilometers.

As in every division water crossing, the 60th Engineers worked like beavers. A railway bridge over the Emscher, converted for vehicular traffic by Company B was used by so much 35th traffic that it was called "Remagen Jr." At this site one company captured 19 Germans who had fired at the



"Across the Rhine"

"A real luxury"



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engineers. Twelve of the Germans gave up quickly when a 748th Tank bulldozer opened fire.

Company A of the 60th had to build a culvert across the deep Emscher. 390 feet of culvert were used and two powerful dozers, working eight hours straight, pushed enough dirt over the culvert to pass traffic. Both A and B companies threw treadway bridges over the Rhein-Herne Canal to complete the crossings.

On 10 April the 134th took the city of Gelsenkirchen, one of the largest Ruhr cities which had a prewar population of more than 300,000. The 137th continued its steady push to the south.

By the 11th, the 134th had reached positions along the north bank of the Ruhr River and the 137th had swept through the rail-rich cities of Herne and Wanne-Eickel to reach the river in its zone. The following day, the 1st Battalion of the 134th continued to attack to the south, clearing the enemy from the finger-shaped bend in the river. In their sectors along the bank of the river, both the 134th and 137th were mopping up the last of enemy resistance.

Meanwhile, the 320th had linked up with elements of the 95th Division near the town of Lunen and had reached the outskirts of Dortmund. Then the 35th was ordered to move to the XIX Corps sector near the Elbe River on a direct line to Berlin. This was 12 April, 18 days after the Santa Fe had crossed the Rhine. In that time it had captured 3,779 prisoners, including prisoner number 20,000, a baby-faced 16-year-old less than five feet tall who hardly measured up to the Division's first prisoner, a burly 23-year-old Wehrmacht soldier.

"Our war is over"



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Captured German gun, Borth, Germany



35th Div. scouts in vicinity of Heinsberg, Germany

35th Div. doughs search Herne, Germany, for snipers



Artillery softens up Strauch, Germany



Temporary bridge near Saaralbe, Germany



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HEADQUARTERS 35th INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 35, U. S. ARMY
DAILY INFORMATION SHEET 21 April 1945
NUMBER 55
OFFICIAL

1. COMMENDATION. The following congratulatory message from the Commanding General, Ninth United States Army, 12 April 1945, is published for the information of all troops:

1. The following Message has been received from the Chief of Staff, United States Army:

MY CONGRATULATIONS AND ADMIRATION TO YOU, YOUR CORPS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS AND TO ALL YOUR MEN FOR THE MAGNIFICENT JOB DONE IN THE ADVANCE TO THE RHINE AND THE CROSSING INTO THE RUHR.

Signed: MARSHALL
Chief of Staff.

2. It gives me great pleasure to pass to you and the personnel of your command this congratulatory message from General Marshall.

I wish to add my own congratulations and commendations to you, your officers and men for superb manner in which you have accomplished these great tasks. The advance to the Rhine and the crossing into the Ruhr will undoubtedly rank high in the annals of history as an outstanding military achievement.

I desire that this communication be read to all troops as early as practicable.

W. S. SIMPSON
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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HEADQUARTERS 35th INFANTRY DIVISION
APO No. 35, U. S. Army
DAILY INFORMATION SHEET
NUMBER 59
OFFICIAL

1. ORDER OF THE DAY. The following Order of the Day issued by the Supreme Commander will be brought to the attention of all troops of this command:
To Every Member of the AEF.

The Battle of the Ruhr has ended with complete success. Following hard upon the final destruction of the German forces west of the Rhine, the Twenty First Army Group thrust powerfully across that river with the U. S. Ninth Army under its command.

Simultaneously, rapid drives across the Rhine and from the Remagen bridgehead by Twelfth and Sixth Army Groups provided the southern arm of a great double envelopment which completely encircled the entire German Army Group "B" and two Corps of Army Group "H," whose mobility was rendered almost zero by our magnificent and tireless air forces. Thereafter, in the pocket thus created the twelfth Army Group eliminated twenty-one enemy divisions, including three Panzer, one Panzer Grenadier and three Parachute divisions. Over three hundred seventeen thousand prisoners of war were captured including twenty-four Generals and one Admiral. Many tanks and more than seven hundred fifty guns were destroyed or taken. Booty is immense and still being counted. The enemy's total losses in killed and wounded will never be accurately known.

The rapidity and determination with which this brilliant action was executed tore asunder the divisions of Field Marshal Model, and enabled all army groups without pause to continue their drive eastward into the heart of Germany.

This victory of allied arms is a fitting prelude to the final battles to crush the ragged remnants of Hitler's armies of the west, now tottering on the threshold of defeat.

(Signed) DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, 20 April 1945.

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Chapter XIV

To Berlins Doorsteps.

THE 35th, on April 13, began its greatest blitz of all, from the Ruhr to the Elbe River. While elements of the Santa Fe were still pounding the Nazis in the Ruhr region, the Division moved in combat teams along the Autobahn which had only recently been the scene of hard fighting. In one day the Santa Fe dashed from Herne, in the Ruhr, to the vicinity of 220 miles. The next day 75 miles were covered. The Santa Fe was on the Elbe, nearest of all the American troops to Berlin.

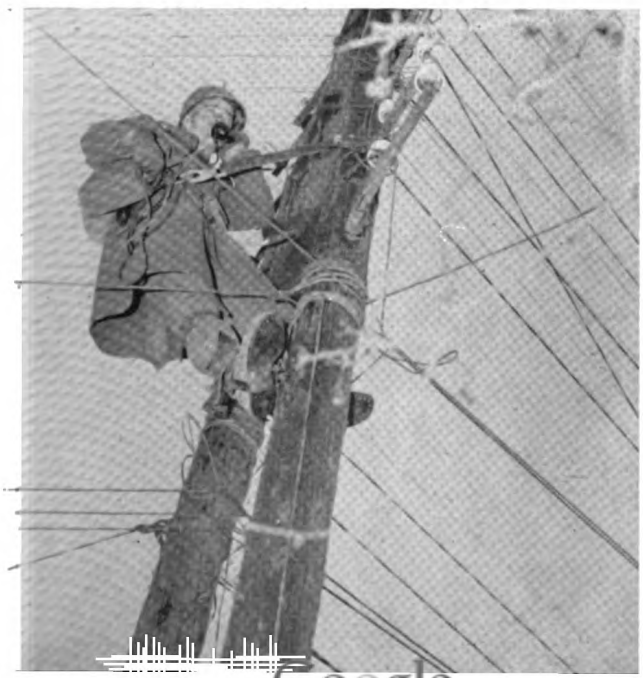
By the 16th, the Division had sent patrols across to the east side of the Elbe. Also on that day the Santa Fe was relieved from the attachment to the XIX Corps and placed under control of the XIII Corps.

Combat Team 320th was then attached to the 83rd Infantry Division and participated in sharp fighting to maintain the 83rd's bridgehead across the Elbe at Zerbst.

On April 15 the Division Command Post moved to Burgstall and, on the 16th, a total of 1,759 prisoners were taken for the day, a new record for a 24-hour haul. On the 15th at 1300 Combat Team 320th, on orders from the 83rd Division, made the last co-ordinated attack, by a unit of the 35th, to cross the Saale River.

Artillery remained active, however, firing on enemy vehicles and positions across the Elbe. The Nazis sent patrols across to the west side of the river and the 137th's Company E was attacked by a 50-man patrol on

"1-2-3-4, testing"



35th Inf. Div. patrol



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"Ham de luxe"



"Music appreciation"

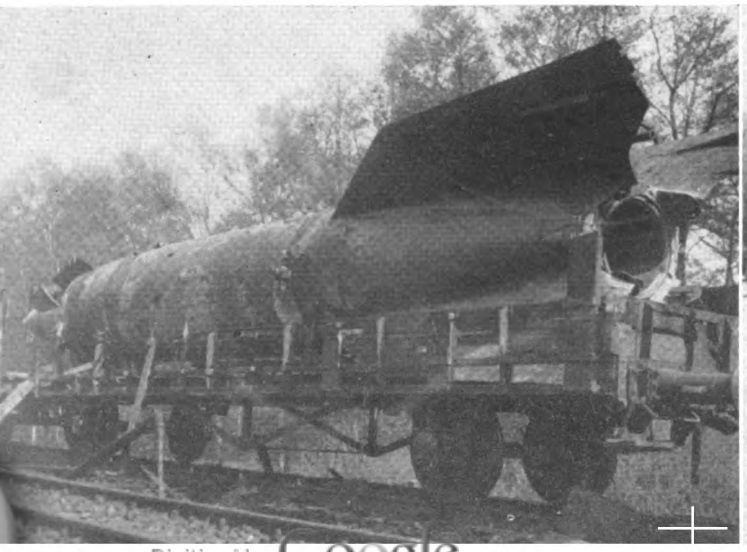
the 17th, near Grieben, but drove the attacks off. Next day, a combat patrol from Company F met a five man enemy patrol near Scelldorf and annihilated it.

The division continued to improve its positions along the Elbe, taking increasing numbers of prisoners both in forward and rear areas. In one week the 35th Reconnaissance Troop captured 430 Nazis. One patrol captured 120 in one day. On the 20th the Division Command Post moved to Tangerhutte. Company G, 134th, and Company F and K, 137th, were closer to Berlin than any American troops on the western front.

On 23 April, Companies A and B of the 134th, combined with elements of the 60th Engineers, cleared the woods and destroyed enemy equipment in the vicinity of Colbitz and Angern. Meanwhile, the 320th having been relieved from attachment to the 83rd Division, remained in division reserve and reconnoitered the division sector for defense against possible counter-attack.

In one day, 24 April, Santa Fe troops captured SS Major General Heinz Jost and the Clauswitz Task Force Commander, Lt. Gen. Unrein. Jost, listed in Shaef's "Who's Who In Nazi Germany," and head of the Gestapo in foreign countries, was captured by 2nd Lt. Darrel Droslem and S/Sgt. A.

"V-2"—Rocket bomb found near the Elbe River



"German street scene"



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"More German mud"



"Newly captured"

Rohleder of Counter-Intelligence Corps, who found him in a house at Magdeburg. Unrein, in civilian clothes and riding a bicycle, was captured by a 35th Reconnaissance Troop patrol under Cpl. Mike Waseline.

A party of seven MP's headed by Major Hal Briggs took an entire Hungarian airfield near the Elbe. The garrison was carrying on with all the routine of an American army camp and included families of the Hungarian officers and a detachment of "WACS."

In the 83rd Division bridgehead, 320th's zone, Pfcs. Oswald D'Amadio and Erwin Danielack captured a veritable "Man from Mars" after he swam down the Elbe in an attempt to place a 500-lb bomb to destroy the pontoon bridge near Barby. Another Nazi, from the same Nazi Swimmer Unit, was also captured by the 60th Engineers. The "Man from Mars" was dressed in a tight-fitting rubber suit resembling a coverall. Attached to the suit was a long hood-like veil. His face was blackened and he was equipped with a pistol, knife and waterproof watch.

The Anti-Tank Company of the 137th discovered three hundred railroad cars filled with V-1 and V-2 bombs, ammunition, arms and medical supplies.

Near Weferlingen a party of twenty-four

"Captured artillery"



"Battle raged here"



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heavily armed Nazis in two trucks were captured by eight 35th Signal Company men. The signal group was about to drive past the trucks when T/Sgt. Earl Combs spotted the German driver in the lead vehicle. He fired a few shots in the air, the other signal men covered the trucks and the SS, Gestapo and Wehrmacht soldiers gave up, although they were armed with ten P-38's, two Lugers, ten Schmeissers, three .30 cal. machine guns, rifles and grenades.

In the Grasleben Salt Mine, Goebel's "morgue," was unearthed 1600 feet underground by 35th intelligence officers, Capt. John S. Foster and Capt. Barnaby Keeney. The files contained information on all Nazi officials together with their photos. Also cached in the mine were the vital financial, realty and historical records of Germany's biggest cities as well as looted rare books and museum treasures. Found buried in four feet of salt were record transcriptions of Hitler's speeches.

More than 1500 Allied prisoners of war were liberated by the division at various points near the Elbe and taken to the Grasleben airfield. There they ate their first good meal since their capture in the Ardennes bulge or as far back as North Africa. The meal was simple: Soup, stew, coffee, pudding and bread. The plain menu was prescribed by Lt. Col. Marvin Mack, Division Surgeon, who examined the men. Their emaciated physical condition prohibited the eating of heavy food. At best, the Nazi diet had provided the Allied soldiers with only 700 calories a day, against a required 1500. Division troops voluntarily contributed two truck loads of cigarettes and candy for them.

After seven months as a prisoner of the Germans, Pfc. Rodger Tipton, North Platte, Nebr., a former soldier in the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon of the 134th Infantry was freed near Mecklenburg. Tipton spent several hours with Brigadier General Miltonberger, his former commanding officer. He wanted to remain with the division and fight, explaining that he had worn his Santa Fe shoulder patch all during confinement and had refused to take it off. Wounded when captured, he was pale and gaunt and still carried a Nazi bullet in his left breast. General Miltonberger told him he showed the spirit of all 35th Division soldiers and outfitted him in a new uniform complete with decorations. Then with genuine appreciation he told him to go home and recuperate.

The 35th Division captured and destroyed immense stores of enemy equipment in the Elbe operation. The list was so long that it reads like an inventory of the Nazi defeat. A few of the major items included:

Tanks, all types	29
Half-tracks	9
Trucks (½-ton or more)	145
Ambulances	9
Railroad locomotives	50
Airplanes (fighter and reconnaissance)	100
Barges	3
Machine guns, 20mm	239
Machine guns, smaller caliber	1,675
Machine pistols	171
Rifles	9,476
Bazookas	370
Mortars (50mm, 80mm, 120mm)	60
Artillery pieces	167
SP guns	16
Rocket guns	20
Railroad guns	2
V-2 bombs	65
V-1 bombs	126
TNT, tons	101¼
Ammunition:	
Artillery (rounds)	1,275
Bazooka (rounds)	2,000
Small arms (rounds)	575,000
Grenades	21,775
Mortar (rounds)	1,500
Mines (all types, including glass)	2,001,150

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Machine gun (rounds)	10,000
Searchlights	120
Range finders	6
Electric generators	56
Field radios	80
Radio receivers and transmitters	100
Ordnance warehouses, containing 20mm, 30mm, 50mm guns, approximately	600
Stocks of spare parts, clips, drums	2
Oil, all grades (gals.)	100,000
Canned goods (carloads)	8
Civilian clothing (carloads)	2
Airplane motors	20

On 26 April, the Division Command Post moved to Dohren in the Hannover area and by April 27, the entire 35th had moved to new locations in this area. The Elbe operation had netted 5,976 prisoners. The Hannover mop-up began, bringing in more than 3,000 in the first week and flooding the division total well over the 31,000 mark after the first week of May.

In ten months of almost continuous action on the Western Front, from Omaha Beach through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and to within a few hours drive of Berlin, the 35th had travelled a twisting, fighting path of more than 1600 combat miles. Over 150 enlisted men had received battlefield appointments as Second Lieutenants. Over four thousand battle awards had been won by Santa Fe officers and men, including a Distinguished Medal to General Baade and the Congressional Medal of Honor to S/Sgt. Junior J. Spurrier of Company G, 134th Infantry.

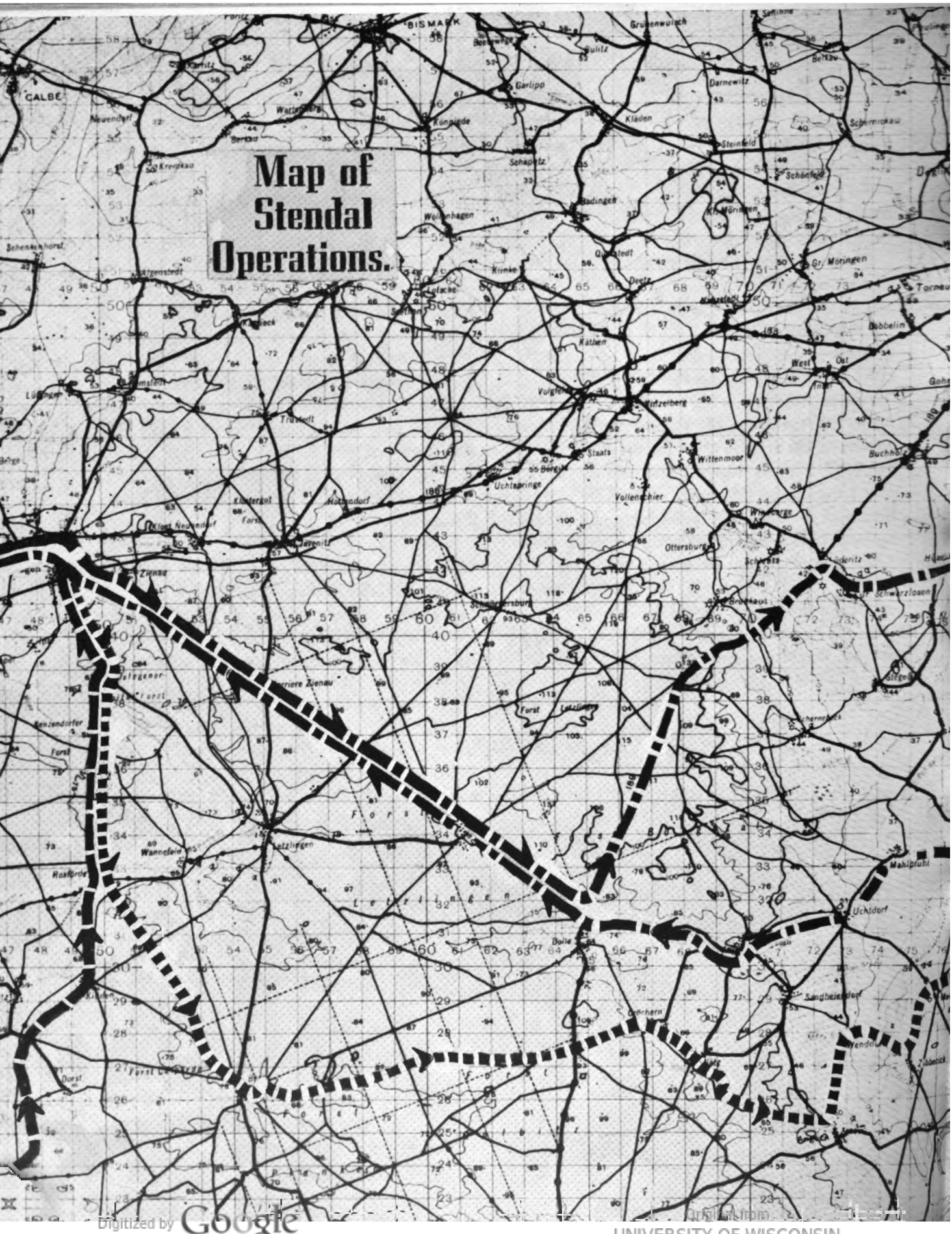
The division had fought under the banner of the First, Third, Seventh and Ninth Armies and ten different corps. The 35th was awarded five battle stars for participation in the Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Germany Campaigns.

When VE Day arrived, the American flag flew bright and proud in the sun in front of the Division Command Post in Dohren, Hannover, many miles and many battles from Omaha Beach. The 35th Infantry Division had accomplished its great mission.

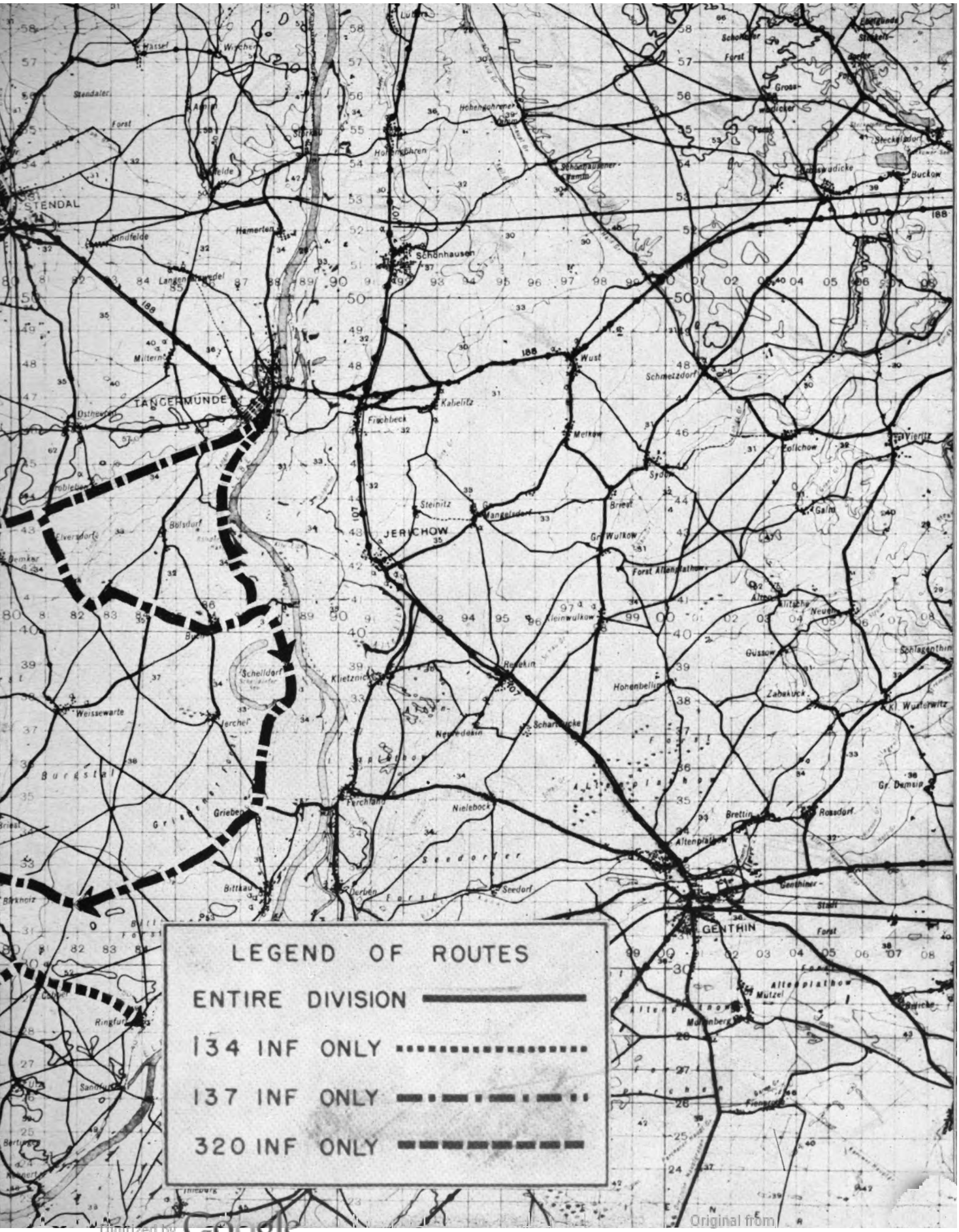
"Aftermath of steel storms"



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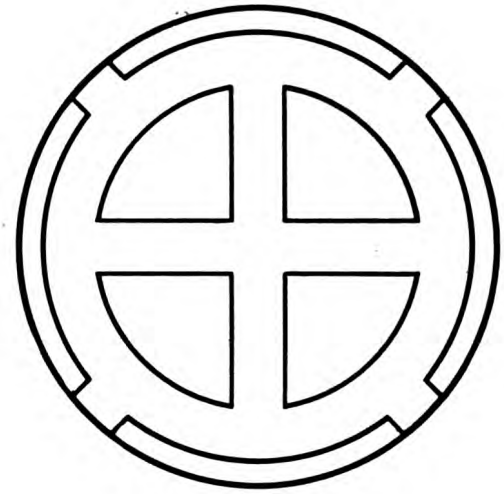
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CHAPTER XV

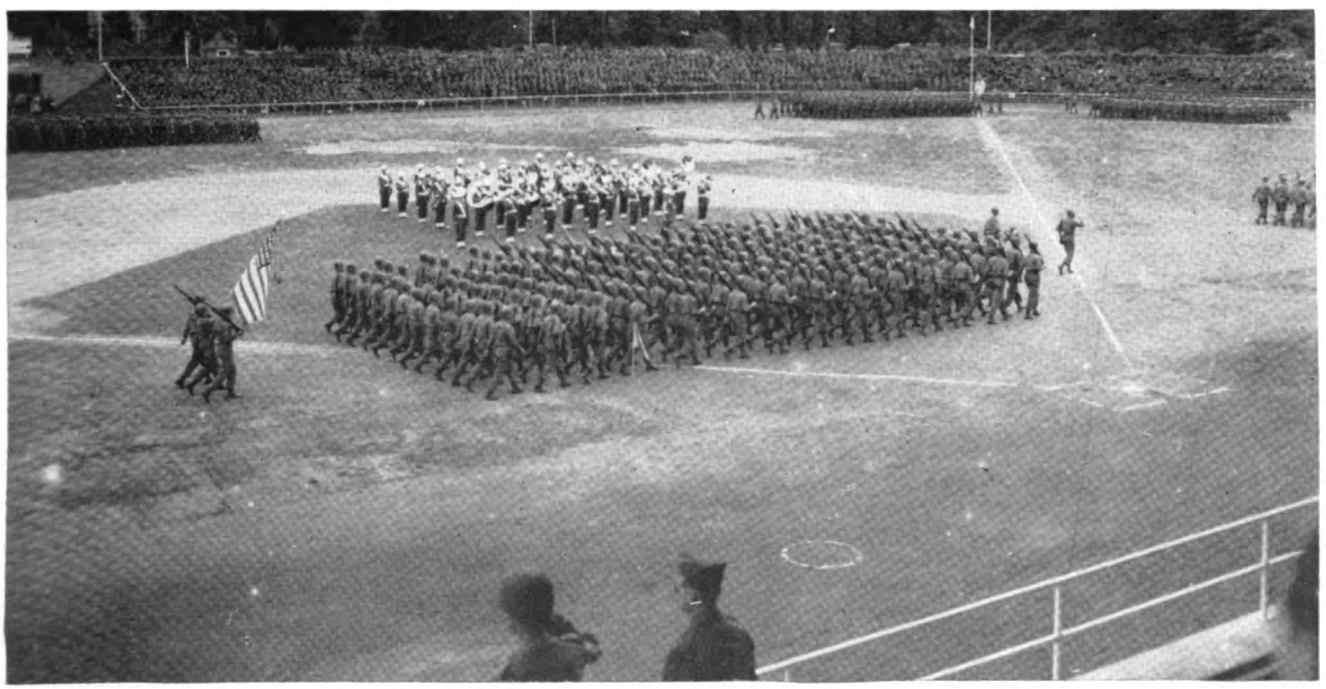
Occupation and Home

ONE minute after midnight on 9 May 45, 335 days after the Allied forces stormed ashore in Normandy, the peace which Europe had dreamed of for nearly six years, was a reality. This was the hour that all the world had yearned for, and the battleweary doughboys of the veteran "Santa Fe" Division were among the millions who drew a grateful breath at the end of bloodshed and destruction. Emblazened on their minds was an indelible road map, showing 1600 combat miles which had led them through endless battle across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and Germany.

The cessation of gunfire was not the cessation of the Santa Fe's role in the Victory in Europe. For war's end brought occupational duties, the 35th's area of responsibility being the city of Hannover and surrounding countryside.

Coming as a surprise to the American troops, was the attitude of the vanquished German population. So long had they endured the round-the-clock bombardment and

"Passing in review"



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sleepless nights, that the actual end of suffering seemed as an unbelievable blessing. Theirs was a spirit of cooperation and mild gratitude amplified by the presence of American troops, which seemed to give them, assurance that peace, although defeat, had really come at last. The thousands of displaced persons who had slaved in German bondage for many long months, were simply uncontrollably exuberant in their rejoicing at liberation. They danced in the streets and even spat upon their former boss-drivers. The presence of armed Santa Fe men averted much wholesale retaliation.

The stay in the Hannover area was a short one, for on 17-18 May units of the 35th Division were relieved of their governing and policing duties by British and the American 84th Infantry Division, and the Santa Fe was sent to Recklinghausen, Germany. After eleven days in that area the division gave the keys of Recklinghausen to the 3rd British Division, on 30 May 45.

Then followed the division's major occupation job. By motor and rail, it moved to the 15th Army area in the vicinity of Koblenz on 1-4 June to relieve the 66th Infantry Division in governmental and occupational duties. Subordinate units of the division were assigned areas and took over governments. The MG and CIC Teams began screening out the Jerries, registering residents, re-establishing some form of government, providing water, transportation and other public utilities. The job was a large and responsible one.

The 137th Infantry, arriving in the area, took on Military Government responsibilities, security and occupation duties in the Landkreises St. Goar, Zell, Cochern and Simmern. The 320th occupied Landkreises Neuwied, Altenkirchen and Koblenz. Division Artillery, with the 448th AAA AW Battalion attached, occupied Landkreises, Birkenfield and Kreuznack. The 134th, having arrived

Units of 35th Inf. Div. reviewed and decorated by Lt. Gen. Len T. Gerow

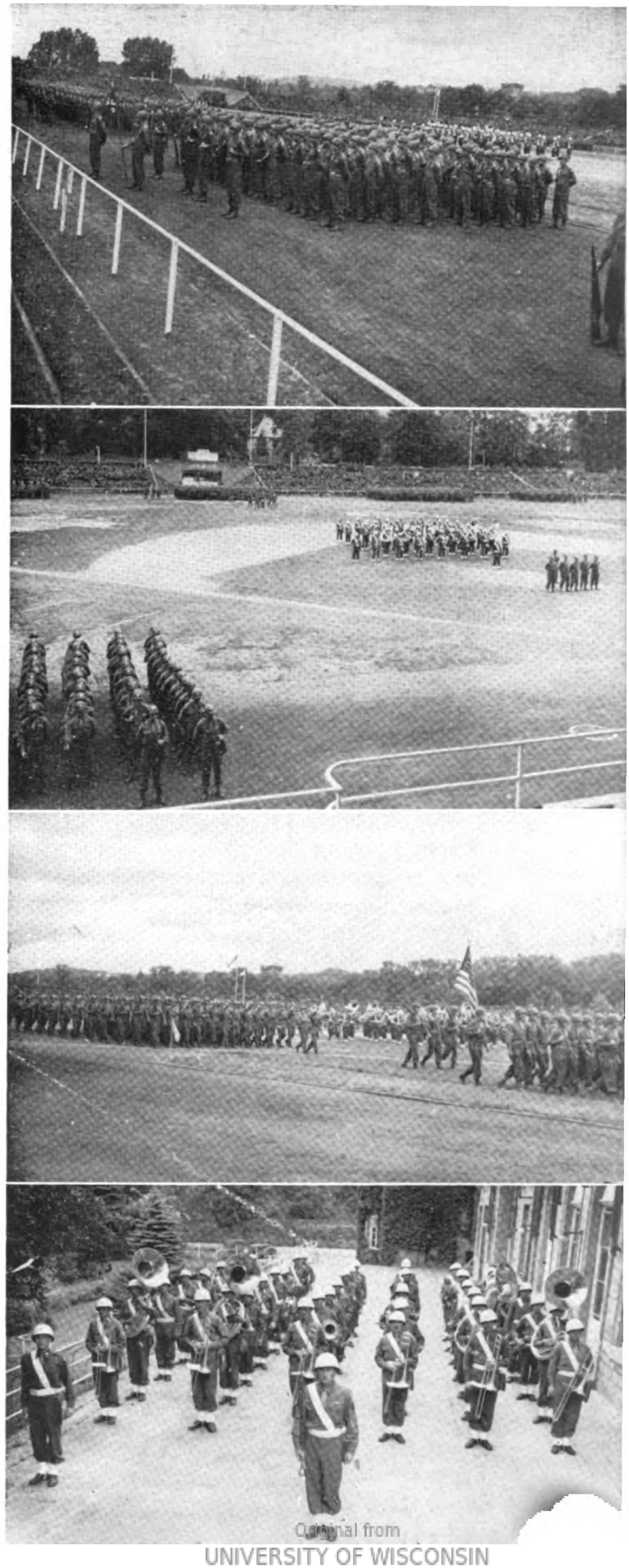
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first and earlier, was already at Mayer and Ahrweiler.

While the maximum number of troops were assembled for training and to maintain a strong mobile reserve in each company or similar unit garrison, many members of the division took advantage of the Army's liberal policy of granting passes, leaves and furloughs. Many of the Santa Fe men went on some of the most desired of the world's sightseeing tours. Some were fortunate enough to select the direction in which they preferred to venture. Many chose a few days in Paris, some elected to take a week on the Riviera, some wanted to see England and Scotland, and a few even visited the Alps of Switzerland. All returned to their units possessed of unforgettable memories of the places known only in stories to the vast majority of Americans.

Now that the shooting was over everyone relaxed. But there were raids for contraband to be conducted in the Koblenz Sub-Area and many problems which required hard work. Even so, each found his opportunity for relaxation. An extensive athletic program was introduced, and within a short while the 35th boasted of one of the finest baseball teams in Europe. The 35th Division defeated the 106th Infantry Division in a thrill-packed game at Koblenz when the "Santa Fe Stadium" in that city was dedicated.

The work and efforts of the chaplains of the 35th Infantry Division are worthy of commendation. Their spiritual ministrations, moral counsel, and religious guidance contributed immeasurably to the proper and complete preparation of the combat soldier for the effective and efficient performance of his duties. Their selfless and conscientious devotion to duty under the most difficult conditions and circumstances inspired self-confidence and hope. They held daily religious services, for large or small groups wherever conditions permitted; comforted

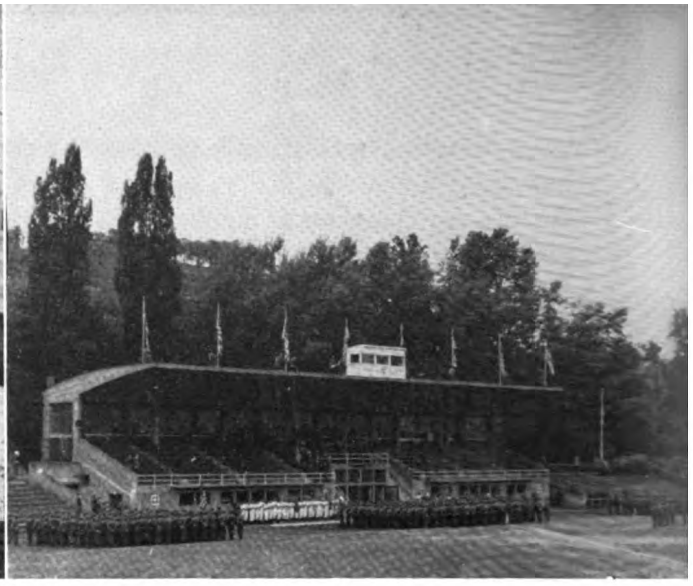


Dedication ceremonies
Koblenz Stadium

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CIC activities



Grand stand—Koblenz Stadium

the wounded and dying at the aid-stations and on the battlefields, and visited the soldiers at their gun-emplacements and in their fox-holes. They also gave spiritual comfort to the sick and wounded at the hospitals, and rendered appropriate religious services for the dead at the cemeteries.

At all times the chaplains made themselves available for whatever ministrations or services that they might render, not only to the soldiers, but to their families as well. Because of the confidence that was placed in them and the respectful positions that they held, the chaplains were able to help comfort the anxious and bereaved loved-ones of the many wounded and killed soldiers. In the special ministration, they wrote several thousand letters of condolence to parents, wives, and relatives.

As a consequence of their work, the chaplains were regarded by the soldiers and their families as friends in time of need, and as consecrated men of God who walked by their side representing the things for which they fought.

The Information and Education program found many active participants while the division underwent a considerable amount of exchange of personnel. High point men who would not be eligible for service with the 35th Division in the Pacific were transferred to units destined for eventual return to the United States for discharge and inactivation. Low point men were assigned to the 35th to replace those men with longer service.

On the 10th of July, the Santa Fe Division was relieved of duty in the Koblenz area by elements of the 10th French Infantry Division.

On the 11th of July, the entire division, less the 137th Infantry Regiment, moved by motor and rail to Camp Norfolk Assembly Area, near Sommesous, France, arriving there on 12 July. At Camp Norfolk, the division received even more low point men to bring it up to full strength with men destined to fight on another front with the 35th Division. The 1st and 2nd Provisional Battalions were created to administer the newly joined men. On the 14th of August the long awaited news of the defeat of Japan was received. V-J Day was spent in mingled feeling of emotion and conjecture of the future of the Division. Beginning on 15 August, the division moved, in a four-day period, to the Port of Le Havre for transportation to England.

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On 11th of July, the 137th assembled at Camp White Tie, near Brussels, Belgium. Here the regiment had the signal honor of acting as the guard of honor for President Harry S. Truman, who was en route to the Potsdam Conference.

Following this duty the 137th sailed on the S. S. Cristobal on 23 August, arriving 31 August at Boston Harbor and Camp Myles Standish. From there the troops went on recuperative furloughs to assemble with other units of the division later at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky.

The division, less the 137th, departed from Southampton, England, on 5 September aboard the "Queen Mary" — the world's third largest liner afloat, and holder of the trans-Atlantic crossing record. The Santa Fe arrived in the United States five days later, dropping anchor in New York Harbor on 10 September. From there the troops entrained for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and then scattered throughout the country on thirty and forty-five day furloughs.

The trip back from Europe aboard the Queen Mary, with its recreational facilities, library, post exchanges, news broadcasts, USO groups augmented by local talent and movies, made the voyage almost that of a peacetime tourist trip. Messing was excellent in quality and quantity, and the quarters, while necessitating double bunking, were adequate.

At Camp Breckinridge, the division's strength was quickly cut. High point men went back to civilian life, their job finished. The low point men were transferred to other active units.

On 7th of December, four years after Pearl Harbor, the 35th Infantry Division ceased to exist as a unit of the Army of the United States.

Thus ends the history of a combat division —the history of the men of the "Santa Fe," who accepted the great responsibility of carrying the fight to the enemy.

This is a history of the faith and courage of the common soldier who, in the great tests of combat, pounded through the hedgerows of St. Lo—stopped the Hun at MORTAIN—battered out victory at BASTOGNE—cut his way through the SIEGFRIED LINE, and swept the Germans across the RHINE to the doorsteps of Berlin.

This is a history of men to whom fate entrusts the safekeeping of the great luxuries, Liberty and the Four Freedoms—men who day and night listened to the angry whispers of sudden death—men who lived and died for those they loved—men, who in closing the final chapter of WORLD WAR II, return to their homes; American Citizens with an inner knowledge of their duties well done.

Church at Maria Laach



Military Gov.—Ahrweiler, Germany



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137th Inf. Regt. honor gua
for President Harry S. Tru



President Harry S. Truman boards plane after reviewing 137th Inf.—Brussels, Belgium



President Harry S. Truman speaks to Col. Wm. S. Murray, C. O., 137th Inf.

Home run for the Santa Fe Indians—Koblenz, Germany



"Ole swimmin' hole"—German style



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V-E Day celebration, Hannover, Germany



Street scene, Hannover, Germany



Occupational duties, Hannover, Germany

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7 Dec. 45—Camp Breckinridge, Ky.

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THE 35th AWARDS AND DECORATIONS



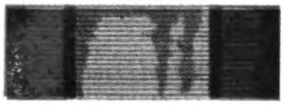
EUROPEAN THEATRE RIBBON
NORMANDY
NORTHERN FRANCE
RHINELAND
ARDENNES
CENTRAL EUROPE



MEDAL OF HONOR
1



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS
35



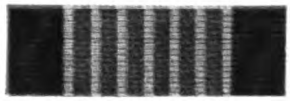
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL
1



SILVER STAR
651
OAK LEAF CLUSTER 39



LEGION OF MERIT
16



SOLDIERS MEDAL
32



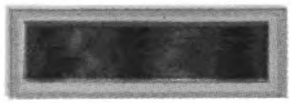
AIR MEDAL
42
OAK LEAF CLUSTER 101



BRONZE STAR MEDAL
3274
OAK LEAF CLUSTER 232



PURPLE HEART
More than 15,000



DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE

1st BN. 134 INF.
CO. C. 134 INF.
2nd PL. CO. D., 134 INF.
3rd BN. 134 INF
CO. F. 137 INF.
1st BN. 320 INF.

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735th ORDNANCE COMPANY



SPECIAL TROOPS



35th QUARTERMASTER COMPANY



35th SIGNAL COMPANY



161st FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION



35th RECONNAISSANCE TROOP



60th ENGINEER BATTALION



127th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION



219th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION



216th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION



110th MEDICAL BATTALION



134th INFANTRY REGIMENT



137th INFANTRY REGIMENT



320th INFANTRY REGIMENT

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ORGANIZATION OF 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION AS OF 1 JAN. 1941



35th Div. Hq. & Hq. Co.
69th Inf. Brigade, Hq. & Hq. Co.
134th Inf. Regt.
137th Inf. Regt.
70th Inf. Brigade, Hq. & Hq. Co.
138th Inf. Regt.
140th Inf. Regt.
110th Med. Regt.
110th Engr. Regt.
110th Q. M. Regt.
60th Field Artillery Brigade, Hq. & Hq. Btry.
130th F. A. Regt.
127th F. A. Regt.
161st F. A. Regt.
35th Signal Co.
35th M. P. Co.
Medical Det. Sp. Troops
Hq. Sp. Troops
110th Ordnance Co.



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ORGANIZATION OF 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION AS OF 7 DEC. 1945

35th Inf. Div.
134th Inf. Regt.
137th Inf. Regt.
320th Inf. Regt.
Hq. 35th Div. Arty.
127th F. A. Bn.
219th F. A. Bn.
216th F. A. Bn.
161st F. A. Bn.
Hq. Btry. 35th Div. Arty.
60th Engr. Bn.
35th Rcn. Trp.
35th Q. M. Co.
35th Signal Co.
Hq. Sp. Troops
110th Med. Bn.
35th M. P. Plat.
35th Div. Band
735th Ord. Co.
Med. Det. Sp. Troops
Med. Det. Div. Arty.
Hq. Co. 35th Inf. Div.

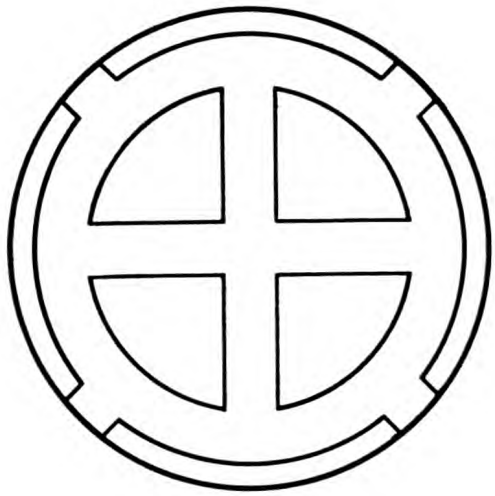


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DIVISION COMMANDERS

MAJOR GENERAL RALPH TRUMAN
23 Dec. 40 to Oct. 41 (Ordered into Federal Service)

MAJOR GENERAL WILLIAM H. SIMPSON
October 41 to April 42



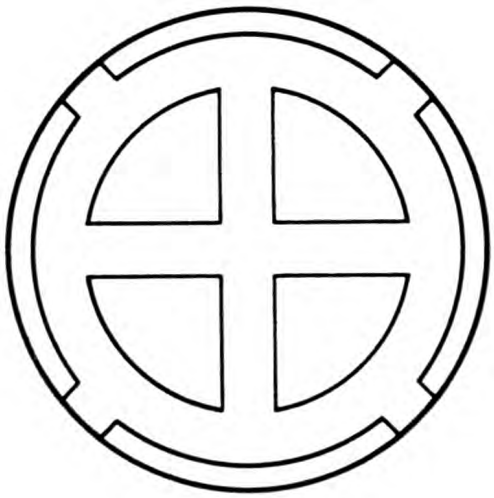
MAJOR GENERAL MAXWELL MURRAY
April 42 to January 43

MAJOR GENERAL PAUL W. BAADE
Jan. 43 to 7 Dec. 45 (Date of Deactivation)

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UNITS ATTACHED TO 35TH INF. DIV. DURING COMBAT



737th Tank Battalion
654th Tank Destroyer Battalion
448th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (AW)
784th Tank Battalion






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COMMAND POST LOCATIONS
OF
35TH INFANTRY DIVISION

1.	Near COLUMBIERS, 9 Km SE of Isigny	7-9 July 44
2.	Near MON-SUR-ELLE, 2½ Km NW of St. Clair-Sur-Elle	9-21 July 44
3.	Near VILLERS-FOSSARD, 5 Km NNE of St. Lo	21-28 July 44
4.	½ Km S of St. Lo	21-28 July 44
5.	1 Km SE of CONDE-SUR-VIRE, r Km NW of Torigni-Sur-Vire	31 July-1 Aug 44
6.	1 Km E of DOMJEAN, 3 Km NE of TESSY-SUR-VIRE	1-2 Aug 44
7.	1½ Km E of PONTFAROY, near St. Marie-Octre-L'Eau	2-5 Aug 44
8.	1 Km N of LOUVIGNY	5-7 Aug 44
9.	1 Km S of NOTRE DAME DE TOUCHET	7-13 Aug 44
10.	3 Km SE of LE MANS	13-15 Aug 44
11.	8 Km S of CHATEAUDUN, at Chateau De Champ Romain	15-18 Aug 44
12.	NW Edge of ARTENAY	18-20 Aug 44
13.	3 Km WSW of PITHIVIERS, at Pithiviers-Le-Viel	20-22 Aug 44
14.	12 Km W of MONTARGIS, at La Carriere	22-24 Aug 44
15.	5 Km W of COUTENNAY	24-30 Aug 44
16.	S Edge of FONTVANES, 6½ Km E of Estissac	30 Aug-2 Sept 44
17.	1 Km E of ROSNAY-HOPITAL, 11 Km N of Brienne-Le-Chateau	2-9 Sept 44
18.	3 Km E of MOUTROT, 8 Km SSE of Tour	9-12 Sept 44
19.	1 Km N of CIENTREY	12-15 Sept 44
20.	2½ Km SE of COYVILLER, 9 Km S of St. Nicholas	15-18 Sept 44
21.	2 Km NE of BUSSIONCOURT	18-25 Sept 44
22.	AMANCE—in Buildings	25 Sept-7 Nov
23.	ATTILLONCOURT	7-12 Nov 44
24.	ORIOCOURT	12-14 Nov 44
25.	DALHAIN	14-18 Nov 44
26.	MORHANGE	18-26 Nov 44
27.	LENING	26 Nov-Dec 44
28.	ST. JEAN ROHRBACH	5-7 Dec 44
29.	WOUSTVILLER	7-17 Dec 44
30.	SARREINSMING	17-22 Dec 44
31.	ST. JEAN ROHRBACH	22-23 Dec 44
32.	METZ	23-26 Dec 44
33.	TONTELANGE	26-27 Dec 44
34.	PERLE	29 Dec 44-8 Jan 45
35.	ARSDORE	29 Dec 44-8 Jan 45
36.	STRAINCHAMPS	8-19 Jan 45
37.	METZ	19-23 Jan 45
38.	BOURDENAY	23-24 Jan 45
39.	TIEFFENBACH	24-30 Jan 45
40.	LACROIX-SUR-MUESE, overnight stop enroute to Holland	30-31 Jan 45
41.	EKKELRADE	31 Jan-4 Feb 45
42.	GANGELT	4-28 Feb 45
43.	OBERBRUCH	28 Feb-1 Mar 45
44.	WASSENBERG	1-2 Mar 45
45.	KALDENKIRCHEN	2-3 Mar 45
46.	VENLO	4-5 Mar 45
47.	NIEUKERK	4-5 Mar 45
48.	LINTFORT	5-13 Mar 45
49.	KALDENKIRCHEN	13-26 Mar 45
50.	DINSLAKEN	26-30 Mar 45
51.	KREUL	30 Mar-1 Apr 45
52.	BUER	1-11 Apr 45
53.	HERNE	11-13 Apr 45
54.	GRASLEBEN	11-13 Apr 45
55.	BURGSTALL	15-20 Apr 45
56.	TANGERHUTTE	20-26 Apr 45
57.	HANNOVER	26 Apr-18 May 45
58.	RECKLINGHAUSEN	18 May-2 June 45
59.	MARIA LAACH	2 June-12 July 45
60.	CAMP NORFOLK, 2 Km N of Sommesous	12 July-15 Aug 45
61.	CAMP LUCKY STRIKE	15 Aug-22 Aug 45
62.	TIDWORTH BARRACKS	22 Aug-5 Sept 45
63.	CAMP BRECKINRIDGE, KY	10 Sept-Dec 7 45

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Silent Glory

A silent glory comes to a soldier with the realization of his part in the victory over evil.

There is a dignity as clean as birth in a man's willingness to risk his life for what he knows is right.

The bond between fighting men is a tremendous force. It is made imperishable by the unity of purpose.

When the men of this infantry division won the terrible fight at St. Lo their glory was the courage which they had found in themselves. And when they pushed on through the blood-red soil of Mortain and across France into the muddy bog of Lorraine they did not shout of their glory for it was in them and it did not need a voice.

War was misery and pain in Germany and in the bitter white snow of the Ardennes, and the price of beating Germany was a weariness at times that was almost death.

The destruction of Hitlerism was an endless succession of battles, violent and savage encounters that drained the sunlight out of soldiers.

But when the enemy was beaten, the warmth returned to soldiers of the 35th. It was the warmth of victory and freedom for millions of enslaved people. It was the same fiery flame that kindled the greatness of America. This was the real glory.



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ATLANTA, GEORGIA

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